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ANALYSE DES PROBLEMES DU CONSOMMATEUR DE LOISIR

ET PROPOSITION D'OBJECTIFS

POUR L'EDUCATION A LA CONSOMMATION DE LOISIR

ANALYSIS OF THE LEISURE CONSUMER'S PROBLEMS

AND PROPOSALS FOR LEISURE CONSUMER EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	iii
RESUME (en francais).....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Chapter	
1. A THEORETICAL REVIEW OF THE PROBLEMS OF THE LEISURE CONSUMER	
1.1 Background to the Study of the Leisure Consumer's Problems.....	11
1.2 A Framework for Investigating Leisure Consumer Consumer Problems.....	19
1.2.1 Economic Influences.....	21
1.2.2 Politico-Institutional Influences.....	22
1.2.3 Social Influences.....	25
1.2.4 Psychological Influences.....	39
1.3 Resume.....	51
2. PROBLEMS REPORTED BY THE CONSUMERS THEMSELVES	
2.1 Introduction.....	56
2.2 The Problems Investigated.....	60
2.3 Methodology of the Study by Belley et al.	64
2.3.1 Methodology for the Investigation of Type 1 Leisure Problems.....	65
2.3.2 Methodology for Type 1 Problems.....	71
2.4 Findings.....	76
2.4.1 Leisure Type 1 Problems.....	76
2.4.2 Leisure Type 2 Problems.....	91
2.4 Conclusion.....	94
3. CONCLUSION: OBJECTIVES FOR LEISURE CONSUMER EDUCATION	
3.1 A Common Approach to Leisure Consumption Problems?..	99
3.2 The Need for a Critical Attitude.....	101
3.2.1 The Critical Attitude and the Disadvantaged Leisure Consumer.....	105
3.2.2 The Critical Attitude in Relation to Leisure Consumption Forces.....	109
3.2.3 The Critical Attitude in Relation to Reported Problems.....	113
3.3 Final Remarks.....	117
BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PRINCIPLE REFERENCES CONSULTED.....	121

List of Tables

Table 1	Average Recreation and Reading Expenditures by Family Income--Eight Cities, Canada, 1976.....	14
Table 2	Distribution and Incidence of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems According to Category.....	77
Table 3	Relative Number (Percentage) of Problems with Leisure Services and Goods Compared with Non-Leisure.....	79
Table 4	Percentage of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems in the Services and Goods Sectors According to the Level of Defense Mechanisms of the Individual.....	80
Table 5	Comparison of the Percentage of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems Considered Serious.....	82
Table 6	Comparison of the Percentage of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems That Are Solved to the Satisfaction of the Consumer.....	84
Table 7	Percentage of Population Segment Reporting One or More Leisure Consumption Problems According to Level of Defense Mechanisms.....	87
Table 8	Average Leisure Consumption of Various Social Groups..	91
Table 9	Percentage of Consumers Worried About Lack of Leisure According to Level of Leisure Consumption.....	93

Résumé

La présente étude traite des tensions que subit l'individu par rapport aux différents problèmes qu'il rencontre dans le domaine de la consommation de loisir. Une intervention de type éducatif fournit un important moyen de réduire ces tensions, et, constitue par le fait même, une action qui contribue à la "qualité de l'expérience du loisir." Le but de cette étude est de proposer des objectifs pour l'éducation à la consommation de loisir.

La méthodologie employée consiste en l'analyse des problèmes et la proposition de solutions pour ceux-ci. A l'intérieur de cette approche nous proposons un modèle socio-psychologique comme grille d'analyse de la littérature et des problèmes reliés à la consommation de loisir. Par une analyse de la littérature, le premier chapitre traite des forces économiques, politico-institutionnelles, sociales et psychologiques qui influencent la consommation de loisir, ainsi que des mécanismes dont elles se servent, et de la nature des problèmes qui en résultent.

Nous trouvons au deuxième chapitre une analyse secondaire de l'étude faite par l'Office de la protection du consommateur en 1977. Cette analyse a permis l'étude de problèmes de loisir tels que: la défectuosité de biens, les prix excessifs de biens ou de services, la qualité des services, etc. Malgré le fait qu'un bon nombre de problèmes se trouvent dans le domaine du loisir, les principaux résultats indiquent que le consommateur demeure relativement vulnérable dans ce domaine comparativement à

d'autres: 1) il semble y avoir une sous-représentation des problèmes de services de loisir, 2) les problèmes reliés au loisir sont considérés comme étant moins sérieux, et 3) il apparaît plus facile de trouver une solution satisfaisante aux problèmes de loisir. Cependant, le manque de perception des problèmes de loisir semble diminuer pour les individus ayant des mécanismes de défense élevés.

Dans la conclusion, qui est basée sur l'analyse des deux premiers chapitres, l'auteur note tout d'abord que les tensions subies par le consommateur de loisir sont reliées à trois types de problèmes. Le premier type touche la difficulté qu'ont divers groupes sociaux à accéder à la consommation de loisir, ainsi que le manque apparent de sensibilisation à ce problème. Le deuxième type concerne les problèmes rattachés aux forces et aux mécanismes économiques, politico-institutionnels, sociaux, et psychologiques, tandis que le troisième type touche les "micro-problèmes" traités dans le deuxième chapitre et la vulnérabilité relative du consommateur de loisir par rapport à ce genre de problèmes. On propose alors des objectifs éducatifs pour chaque type de problème, basés sur le principe que l'individu est à la fois une des sources de ses problèmes, et un des moyens de les réduire. En dernier lieu, l'auteur souligne que même si un premier pas essentiel a été fait relativement à l'aide que l'on peut apporter au consommateur de loisir--en élaborant des objectifs pour l'éducation à la consommation de loisir--on a besoin de programmes concrets pour réduire les tensions que subit le consommateur de loisir.

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INTRODUCTION

A little prince was to make an excursion; they asked him:

"Would Your Highness like to ride a horse or sail in a boat?"

And he answered: "I want to ride a horse and sail in a boat."

- Hjalmar Soderberg in Staffan Linder

Leisure consumption is the quintessence of the consumer society. Europe in 21 days, four-wheel drive super-duper-go-anywhere mountain buggies, expeditions in Africa, or, closer to home perhaps, concert tickets, cameras, art lessons, Florida vacations, provincial parks, arenas, video games, and so on are all top quality grist for the modern consumer's insatiable mill. Many would even argue that it is these luxuries-turned-necessities that give spice to life.

However, the consumption process that involves these goods and experiences does not always produce a sweet-smelling product. Equipment malfunction, low-quality goods, high-cost services, disadvantaged leisure consumers, disappointment, and vicious circles of wants and needs, are all various problems that the

leisure consumer may run into. These problems arise from a failure of the consumption object to live up to the expectations of the consumer. The malfunction of sports equipment causes disappointment when one believes that it should have lasted longer than it actually did. Or the Florida vacationer who accepts the implicit advertising claims that Florida is always sunny, may suddenly find his vacation dull and expensive when it begins to rain. In relation to all these problems, a gap exists between the expectations of the leisure consumer, and reality.

Leisure consumer education--through its role as a change agent--is essentially concerned with aiding the consumer to reduce the gap between his expectations and the reality of leisure consumption. Since leisure consumption is considered by many to be an important component of leisure, or even synonymous with leisure, if leisure consumption can be made more satisfactory and meaningful through education, then the leisure experience in general will also benefit.

In fact, the primary goal of leisure consumer education is to aid the leisure experience to be more satisfactory and meaningful in the field of leisure consumption. For this reason, the objectives of leisure consumer education should be in harmony with those of a field of study that attempts to make the leisure experience in general more meaningful. This field is leisure education.

The propositions for leisure education that we intend to use as guidelines for the present study are found in André Thibault's

doctoral thesis (1980). Thibault suggests:

Si l'objectif ultime de l'expérience du loisir, c'est l'expression de la liberté et de la créativité individuelle, il est évident que l'éducation au loisir devra offrir les conditions de cette expression. En tant qu'action de facilitation, l'éducation au loisir rendant les individus conscients des déterminismes de leur expérience de loisir leur permet de les manipuler et de "les réapproprier" librement selon l'expression de Laborit. (Thibault, 1980, 42)

Here Thibault states that the quality of the individual's leisure experience needs to be improved by aiding the individual to be free and creative in leisure. This is to be achieved by aiding the individual to be critical and aware of the various forces and mechanisms that attempt to shape and mould the individual's leisure experience to the detriment of this experience.

With respect to leisure consumer education, we need to utilize the traditional role of education--increasing an individual's knowledge, skills, and changing attitudes--to develop critical attitudes and an understanding of the forces and mechanisms that detract from an individual's leisure experience. Through these critical attitudes and knowledge, the individual will reduce the gap between his expectations and the reality of leisure consumption. An individual equipped with these attitudes and understandings is then more likely to assure himself of satisfactory and meaningful leisure consumption.

However, before education can attempt to give an individual the attitudinal or conceptual tools that would allow him to improve on his leisure consumption, that education itself must be based upon an accurate comprehension of the required attitudes and knowledge. In the context of leisure consumption, that comprehension in turn requires study and definition of unsatisfactory leisure consumption and its contributing factors and mechanisms.

The literature on a systems approach to education confirms the preceding affirmation (Kaufman 1972, Miller, 1970). In particular, Kaufman states that the first required step in educational programme planning is a clear description of the nature of the problem. For Kaufman, and for this study, the notion of a problem is described as follows:

Identify problems based upon needs. It is an outcome gap analysis which determines the gaps between current results and required results, places these gaps in priority order and selects those gaps of highest priority for resolution. The needs selected for action are the "problems."

(Kaufman and English, 1976, 48)

The first step in coming to the aid of the leisure consumer is then to identify the problems of the leisure consumer: this consists of identification of the deficiencies of the present context of leisure consumption and selection of those that are considered important.

In view of the preceding remarks, the thesis of the present study should be clear. The leisure consumption experience is often unsatisfactory. Education that hopes to minimize these deficiencies requires first of all an understanding of their nature and origin. From the various particular needs that are uncovered by this analysis, should be selected those that are of primary importance. Following the identification of leisure consumption problems, the educational action that is required to alleviate these problems can then be stated in terms of educational objectives. The aim of the present research then is to develop general objectives for the field of Leisure Consumer Education.

The usefulness of developing general objectives for leisure consumer education can be appreciated when one considers their role in stimulating the creation of, and in guiding leisure consumer education programmes. There is presently no plan of attack, much less a clearly identified target, formulated by government, educational, or private institutions, that aims at alleviating the problems of the leisure consumer. By pointing out this need, and defining what could be done, the present research hopes to inspire and provide guidance to various programmes that may be able to fulfill this need.

The basic methodology of this study is that of problem analysis and resolution. The theoretical framework for the identification of leisure consumer problems is derived from leisure education and a review of the literature on leisure

consumption. Certain hypotheses suggested by this review will be verified by a secondary analysis of an empirical study. The empirical study will also furnish additional information concerning the problems of the leisure consumer. After this detailed description and analysis of the problems of the leisure consumer, we will be able to suggest educational means of solving the problems of the leisure consumer. These means will be stated in the form of objectives for leisure consumer education.

An Initial Delimitation of the Field of Leisure Consumption

The basic meaning of our use of the term leisure consumption is understood when one considers that much of what is called leisure involves expenditures. Leisure consumption occurs when leisure-related items of all kinds are bought or rented for private use. Examples are the purchase of canoes, baseballs, bicycles, skis, records, cameras, television sets, radios, tents, or cottages. Leisure expenditures are also required for services such as restaurants, hotels, tourism in general, entertainment establishments, and the teaching of music, art, or sports. Finally, parks, libraries, public swimming pools, recreation programmes of all kinds, and government financial assistance to sports and cultural organizations are examples of leisure spending by various levels of government.

A formal definition of the leisure consumer is a person who purchases directly or indirectly (i.e. through taxes) goods or services, whether they be in the public or private sectors, that

are necessary for, or that facilitate a leisure experience. The main concern of this study is with (1) leisure goods such as cameras, snowmobiles, toys, swimming pools; (2) leisure services: music lessons, travel agencies, and any activity offered by a recreation department or ministry; (3) goods or services in the public sector: parks, cultural centres, or any recreation activity sponsored by any level of government; and finally (4) goods or services in the private sector: television sets, "schools" of dancing, and snowmobiles.

The stipulation that, to be considered as leisure consumption, the goods or services must be necessary for, or facilitate a leisure experience, is needed in order to exclude such possibilities as, for example, the purchase of snowmobiles by hydro companies in connection with line maintenance. Even where goods or services fall into a grey area, for instance the purchase of a four-wheel drive jeep that doubles as basic transportation and as a recreational vehicle, the following analyses may still be pertinent in many respects. The definition and examples are proposed principally in order to highlight the diverse forms that leisure consumption can take.

The two main sets of distinctions, goods and services, and the public or private sector are implicit if not explicit in at least one major work (Belley et al., 1980). These distinctions serve to indicate the wide range of leisure consumption forms which may properly be addressed by leisure consumer education.

Finally, our main concern is with leisure consumption as we

have defined it (leisure related monetary expenditures) rather than with consumption that may occur during one's "leisure time". For instance, we do not consider shopping for clothes or food as leisure consumption, unless one also purchases such items for a party or reception.

The preceding delimitation of the field of leisure consumption only succeeds in staking out a particular area of investigation, since a number of questions remain unanswered. Of particular concern is the fact that the above definitions say little about the reasons for leisure spending nor the sorts of problems that the individual may encounter in relation to his leisure spending. These will be the central questions of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Hopefully, though, the reader will now find himself on somewhat more familiar ground.

The reader who may be familiar with consumer protection legislation should be forewarned that the mandate that we give leisure consumer education is more comprehensive than one that could be given to a hypothetical legislation to protect the leisure consumer. To the extent that the judicial process has been concerned with the consumer's problems, it has traditionally attempted to regulate or correct injustices and deficiencies in the relationship between consumer and merchant or consumer and manufacturer. On the other hand, we propose that consumer education has the potential to impact upon the more far-reaching relationship between the individual and his socio-economic environment. Because of this potential, consumer problems can

also be examined that are due to the individual's own perceptions, desires, and actions, or the individual's acceptance of perceptions, desires, and actions that are manipulated and encouraged by society and economic agents in general. From an educational point of view, the root causes of disappointment, frustration, and lack of meaning must be sought in the individual's action, knowledge and attitudes. Consequently, education attempts to minimize these problems by changing the individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes. The judicial system generally has taken a much different approach.

The approach that we shall use in constructing leisure consumer education objectives is straightforward. In the first chapter, we shall provide a general framework to be used in identifying the leisure consumer's problems per se. In order to provide content to the hypotheses suggested by this framework, a study will be made of the works of various authors who have discussed leisure consumption. This review of the literature will supply specific information on the characteristics of leisure consumption problems and the factors that contribute to them.

The second chapter will further complete the information gathered on the nature of leisure consumption problems by directly consulting the leisure consumer. If the first chapter is mainly a review and reinterpretation of various authors, the next chapter is a secondary analysis of an empirical study that investigated consumption problems reported by the individual himself. This analysis will permit us to verify certain hypotheses suggested in

the first chapter. In addition, the second chapter will focus our attention on other characteristics of leisure consumption problems that hitherto have not been identified. Finally, we will be able to glimpse the possible effects of one particular form of leisure consumer education in relation to specific leisure consumption problems.

The first two chapters are an exploration of the characteristics of leisure consumption problems. The third chapter briefly summarizes these problems before going on to indicate the educational alternatives that could aid in overcoming these problems. The final matching of the educational means in relation to the leisure consumption problems will be expressed in terms of general objectives for leisure consumer education.

Chapter 1

A Theoretical Review of the Problems of the Leisure Consumer

1.1 Background to the Study of the Leisure Consumer's Problems

Leisure consumption is an important phenomenon in modern occidental society, both from the viewpoint of its widespread, massive nature, and in relation to the pleasure and benefits that society and individuals expect from it. Leisure consumption plays an important role in modern social and economic life, and is considered to be a prime element in achieving happiness and well-being. This point will be established by first examining the economic importance of leisure expenditures, and the generalized, cross-societal characteristics of leisure spending. Following this, we shall support the argument that leisure consumption is highly valued since it is represented in popular ideology as one of the necessities of the good life. If leisure consumption is highly valued and important to daily life, then we could already predict that any disturbance or disruption of the related

expectations would then be felt by the individual. This then would provide further weight for intervention of an educational nature.

Intuitively, the mere evocation of the term "leisure industries" brings to mind the important role of the production and consumption of leisure in contemporary life. One could endlessly list the individuals, companies, organizations, or even towns and cities that produce some leisure product for an increasingly hungry clientele--a clientele which also has increasing disposable income (Statistics Canada; Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation 1976,1977; 170). These leisure producers range from professional sport to amateur theatre, and from video games to the municipal recreation department. The large scale impact of these producers on the economy is unquestionable, although impossible to indicate with precision. Even if one was able to amass statistics on, for example, income from attendance or sales in the music, sports, and film industries, figures would still be needed on government spending at all levels, and in different sectors such as cultural and outdoor activities.

One author, however, estimates that in the U.S., "Commercial recreation is now the nation's third largest economic force, exceeded only by manufacturing and agriculture" (Gray and Pilegrina, 1973, in Leisure Information Service, 1976). Undoubtedly, our economy, as we know it, would be highly disrupted if leisure consumption ceased to exist.

Since leisure consumption is such a valued element in

contemporary social and economic life, an important area of research would be to identify the mechanisms and means that insure that leisure consumption does not cease to exist. If vast numbers of people depend on leisure spending for their livelihood, surely it is not left to good fortune to insure a cycle of production and consumption. Already, we can hypothesize that a number of means insure that the leisure or play instinct takes a form that vast numbers of people can "cash in" on.

Statistics Canada provides us with the order of magnitude of the average family's "commercialized leisure instinct." Their data indicate the average absolute and percentage expenditures of Canadians on recreation and reading, conservatively defined by Statistics Canada as entry fees to cultural and sports events, certain recreation, sports and camping equipment, health studios, vacation packages, books, newspapers, and magazines. To this could have been added expenditures that were included in other categories, such as specialized clothing, restaurant meals and all expenses connected with unorganized vacations, as well as recreation vehicles (snowmobiles, motorcycles) and bicycles. This type of information is more valuable for our purposes than brute sales, materials, or salary figures are, since they more readily reflect the amount that individuals and families set aside for leisure consumption.

Furthermore, it is quite reasonable to suggest that family or individual spending on leisure surpasses the total of all levels of public spending. In France, for example, Montassier (1980, 331)

finds that family spending in the cultural domain (home entertainment, movies, theatre, concerts etc.), is roughly five times that of all levels of government in the same domain. This fact would suggest that individual and family leisure expenditures should be one of the first areas of interest for leisure consumer education.

The following table presents first of all the average Canadian family's leisure expenditures. Secondly, these expenditures are broken down according to one of the major influences on those expenditures: family income.

Table 1

Average Recreation and Reading Expenditures by Family Income--Eight Cities, Canada (Families and Unattached Individuals)

	all classes	less than 5,000	5,000- 7,900	8,000- 11,999	12,000- 19,999	20,000- 29,999	30,000 and over
n	3,681	289	375	458	1182	917	460
expend- itures	788.70	145.45	322.92	518.62	876.76	1057.88	1564.78
percent of total income	4.4	3.7	4.5	4.9	4.2	4.5	4.2

adapted from Statistics Canada, Urban Family Expenditures, 1976, pp. 2,3.

The preceeding table indicates that leisure consumption, as conservatively defined by Statistics Canada, ranges from 3.7 percent to 4.9 percent of family income. This would suggest that all income groups channel roughly the same proportion of their income towards leisure consumption. However, absolute spending does rise considerably with income, from 145 dollars for the under 5,000 category, to an average 1565 dollars for those who earn 30,000 or more a year.

We should also note that the relative percentage for the income group of less than 5,000 is lower than the others; on the average it is 3.7 percent. It appears that this group spends proportionately somewhat less of its income on leisure consumption than other groups, and in absolute terms, much less than other groups. We could hypothesize that the income of these groups is necessarily diverted to more needed forms of consumption. Already it is evident that although leisure consumption is a widespread phenomenon that cuts across social groups, there are important quantitative differences between these groups.

A recent analysis of American data (1972-73 Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Expenditures Survey, n=20,000) confirms the fact that income is a major factor in determining leisure expenditures (Dardis et al., 1981). This study additionally points out other factors that must be considered as major influences on leisure expenditures. Or, in other terms, a variety of consumer characteristics, other than family income, can also be used to identify the low and high level leisure consumers. In the

terms of Dardis et al., these characteristics are:

Households in the middle of the family life cycle spend more on recreation than households located at either extreme. Households with young children and older households spend less than other households.

Social class has a significant impact on recreation expenditures. Education is positively related to recreation expenditures while there are no definite trends with respect to occupation.

Location of the household is significant. Urban households spend more than rural households while households located in the Western region spend more than other households. These patterns may reflect different life styles as well as different recreation opportunities.

Households headed by non-blacks spend considerably more than households headed by blacks.

(Dardis et al., 1981, 192)

According to these observations, a number of characteristics determine one's level of leisure expenditures: family income, total expenditures, position in life cycle, social class, education, geographical location, and race. Here again, we could restate the fact that leisure consumption varies according to a number of readily identifiable individual characteristics. Ultimately, the observation that different social groups have differing levels of leisure consumption will impact on the

formulation of leisure consumer education objectives. Discussion of this question, though, will be reserved for Chapters 2 and 3.

Although the economic importance of leisure consumption and disparities among leisure consumers can be readily observed, what of the significance of leisure consumption in the daily life of individuals? Along with the pervasive nature of leisure consumption, must be considered its commonly accepted role of purveyor of happiness and satisfaction. Although to our knowledge no study has yet specifically examined the position of leisure expenditures in a hierarchy of the perceived contribution of various possible expenditures to the quality of life, we may nonetheless hypothesize that it would be one of the most important.

To support this contention, we need only to remind the reader of the glowing and favourable terms that are used--in popular or scientific discourse--to describe or define leisure. Thus, any objects or services that facilitate a leisure experience, or are themselves considered as leisure, are necessarily highly valued. In concrete terms, who does not envy the European vacation, a night out on the town, tickets to a sports event, or an electronic home entertainment object? Naturally, the particular forms of leisure expenditures that are valued, vacations versus sports goods for instance, may vary among individuals or families, yet the form that these leisure expenditures take will be highly valued in relation to expenditures on clothing, housing, food, or transportation. If leisure in general is paradise, leisure

consumption is the Garden of Eden.

Another source of verification of this basic hypothesis is found in advertising of all kinds. How are lottery tickets, or cigarettes, sold? By luring the buyer with promises of almost unlimited money to buy the leisure objects of his dreams, or by suggesting that the purchase of a pack of cigarettes is the next best thing to being able to buy a wilderness vacation trip. As a reflection of society's values, in addition to moulding those very values, advertising lets us know at a glance the status and value of leisure consumption.

If one believed the implicit claims of advertising and marketing programmes in general, leisure consumption is the cure-all for everything from tedious jobs to a dull sex life. It were as though materialistic behavior, leisure spending, were seen as the means to attaining non-materialistic needs.

This reasoning cannot help but lead to a dead end, since with a limited amount of money to channel into leisure consumption, as we have seen, one will always be lacking in the satisfaction and happiness that leisure consumption is supposed to bring. With this fundamental gap between the expectations of the leisure consumer and the realistic possibilities of leisure consumption, it should not be surprising that a number of anomalies occur. How, though, to go about identifying and understanding these problems? In the next section we will develop a framework that will guide us in our analysis of the problems of the leisure consumer.

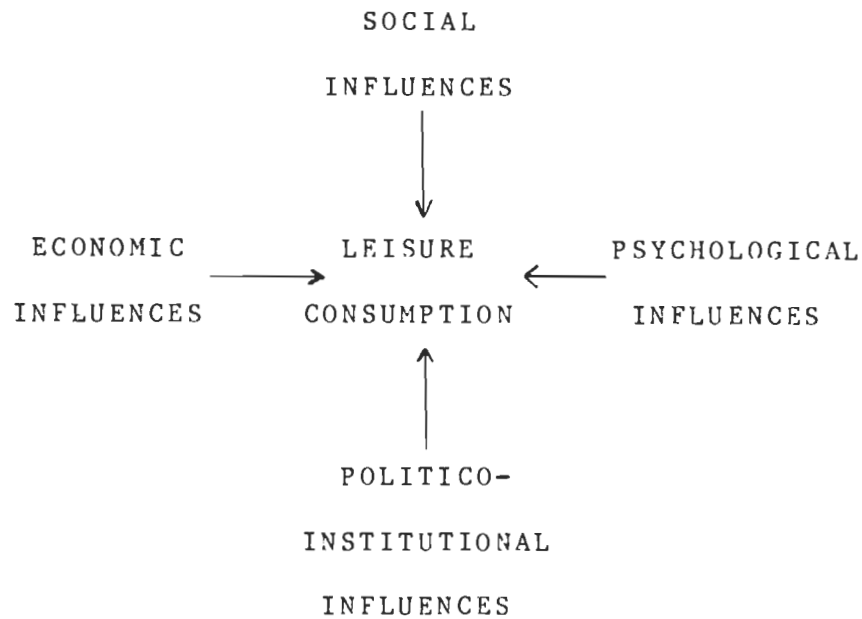
1.2 A Framework for Investigating Leisure Consumer Problems

We would suggest that the basic causes of a discrepancy between the expectations of the leisure consumer and the actual state of leisure consumption must be sought in the forces that shape leisure behavior in general. A minimum of understanding is required of the dynamic forces that determine leisure behavior, if one hopes to isolate the particular factors and mechanisms that lead to leisure consumption problems.

In a doctoral thesis entitled "La situation professionnelle des travailleurs en loisir du Québec comme déterminant de la faisabilité différentielle de l'éducation au loisir", André Thibault synthesizes sociological, psychological, political, and economic viewpoints on the nature of leisure. The author then uses this synthesis to support a socio-psychological approach to leisure education. Initially we will use this synthesis as a basic framework for understanding leisure consumption, and for the exploration of leisure consumer problems. Eventually, though, the same framework will be used in formulating educational objectives.

Thibault postulates, and defends the notion that leisure behavior is a result of a number of interacting forces. The following diagram provides schematic representation of leisure behavior as a resultant of these forces:

Schematic Representation of the Determination of Leisure Consumption



adapted from Thibault, 1980, 20

Thibault goes on to describe and justify the inclusion of each of these forces when attempting to understand leisure behavior. However, each of these forces can also be studied specifically in relation to leisure consumption.

We shall now begin to justify the inclusion of each of these forces in the above framework. This justification shall take the form of a review of authors who (1) indicate the effect of the force on consumption in general or leisure consumption in particular, or (2) write about various leisure consumption problems attributable to the force.

1.2.1 Economic Influences

Thibault considers specifically economic influences (examples are marketing procedures and advertising), noting that these encourage leisure consumption. The economic system is singled out as a force that attempts to redirect the individuals's search for self-expression, and self-realization for a number of reasons: (1) leisure consumption is a necessary factor in the creation of particular forms of work, (2) to the extent that leisure consumption allows the worker to replenish himself, he returns to work refreshed, and therefore more productive, and (3) leisure consumption is the economically exploitable form of leisure. According to this view, the economic system needs and encourages leisure consumption for its own ends, manipulating and exploiting the leisure instinct of the individual. The problem is then one of alienation, in a Marxist sense. Leisure consumption becomes the carrot that entices the worker to produce.

Two well known authors could be cited who have promulgated the thesis that the economic system seeks to control how we spend our money. Evidently, this would also apply to leisure expenditures. Vance Packard in The Hidden Persuaders explains how advertising seeks to orient our choice towards specific choices or brand names. John Galbraith in The Affluent Society goes one step further in arguing that enterprises have to encourage consumption in order for consumption to keep up with production. For a contemporary, extensive discussion of the relationship of leisure

to the market, we could do no better than point the reader to Robert Lane's article, "The Regulation of Experience: Leisure in a Market Society," (Lane, 1978).

Whether or not business, through marketing programmes and advertising, actually control our actions to the point that the first two authors claim, is not as important as the fact that they are doing it, and with at least some success. At least a few consumers fall prey to advertisements that exalt the qualities of the newest running-shoe. Others cannot help but agree with the travel agent that a Florida vacation is just what they need to "wind down" after the pressures of work. The pressure exerted by marketing programmes reduces the individual's freedom to choose in accordance with his own best interests.

1.2.2 Politico-Institutional Influences

A single example will suffice to establish the presence of politico-institutional influences in the field of leisure consumption. Government at all levels has a decided effect on leisure consumption, for at least two reasons.

First, laws exist that (a) specify leisure equipment safety specifications, and (b) attempt to regulate leisure producers' operations. Secondly, governments are leisure producers in their own right, providing equipment and services for which individuals and society pay directly and indirectly. In this sense, governments affect leisure consumption both as a regulatory force and as a para-economic producer of leisure goods and services.

A number of problems arise in relation to politico-institutional influences. First, we could question whether present regulations adequately protect the leisure consumer. Partial evidence exists, as we will later indicate, that the leisure consumer is more vulnerable than the consumer of, for example, food or transportation. If this proves to be correct, should there not be special regulations to protect the leisure consumer?

For example, the 1981 Ontario Muskoka Loppitt (cross-country ski marathon) was held in extremely cold temperatures. As a result, a number of people had to be treated for frostbite. The marathon could easily have been postponed, except that the owners of hotels and restaurants in the area, who would have lost money (the economic force), pressured the organizers to proceed with the event. Although this is a dramatic example involving the health of the leisure consumer, other examples could be cited to support the need for improved legislation to protect the leisure consumer.

The problem with government production of leisure goods and services is that of the distribution, the form (investments in "High Culture" versus local festivals, for instance), and the collective nature of these goods and services. Few would argue that their distribution or form is equitable, either at the municipal, provincial, or national levels.

For example, how are decisions made to invest in competitive sports, rather than community centres? Is there a real democratization of this process, or rather, does it depend on the value judgements of the members of the City Council, or those of a

financial committee?

One could also wonder whether the power of various institutions is not misused by various professional groups. Do the physical activity marketing programmes of Participaction and Kino Québec respond to a need professed by the citizen, or to an "occupational need" of physical educators? The use and abuse of institutional power constitutes a real problem for the leisure consumer.

In spite of the preceeding remarks, a detailed discussion of the politico-institutional Influences and related problems is beyond the scope of this study. A sound knowledge of political economics, the theory of consumer law, and the characteristics of leisure consumption would be prerequisite to such an analysis. Moreover, we consider the problems connected with this area to be of minor importance in comparison with the problems related to the economic, social, and psychological influences on leisure consumption. We would suggest that these problems have less direct impact on the daily life of the leisure consumer. For these reasons we consider that our preceeding identification of the problems associated with this area to be sufficient.

Nevertheless, because of the existence of problems related to this area, leisure consumer education must still accord it importance, even if it has a minor role. The leisure consumer needs to be able to avail himself of legislative and institutional mechanisms that exist on his behalf, such as the many laws that directly touch aspects of consumption, the small claims courts,

and, in Québec, the Office de la protection du consommateur. More importantly, the leisure consumer needs to be encouraged to change, improve, and govern those mechanisms through his role as a citizen (see André Thibault, "Pour une consultation active en loisir", 1981). In this respect the objectives of leisure consumer education must take into consideration the fact that the leisure consumer is also a citizen.

1.2.3 Social Influences

One of the earliest authors to analyse the social functions of leisure consumption was Thorstein Veblen in The Theory of the Leisure Class. Veblen noted that leisure consumption was not sought solely for its intrinsic value, if at all, but had a functional role by communicating social class membership, aspirations, and power. C. Wright Mills, in an introduction to Veblen's well known work, summarizes the relations Veblen saw between work, leisure consumption, and prestige:

Being useless in the struggle for status that had succeeded the struggle for existence, productive work was held to be unworthy. The better classes abstained from it while at the same time they emulated one another. It was not enough to possess wealth in order to win esteem; one had to put it into evidence, one had to impress one's importance upon others. Conspicuous leisure, according to Veblen, did just that--it put one's wealth and power on social display. That was the value of

leisure for this pecuniary society.

(C. W. Mills in Veblen, 1970, xiii)

By exposing the social role of conspicuous consumption, and by noting that leisure consumption was a means through which upper classes laid claims to status, power, and prestige, Veblen staked out an analytical perspective that has nourished countless writers. In his own words:

Abstention from labour is the conventional evidence of wealth and is therefore the conventional mark of social standing; and this insistence on the meritoriousness of wealth leads to a more strenuous insistence on leisure. Nota notae est nota rei isius. According to well-established laws of human nature, prescription presently seizes upon this conventional evidence of wealth and fixes it in men's habits of thought as something that is in itself substantially meritorious and ennobling; while productive labour at the same time and by a like process becomes in a double sense intrinsically unworthy. Prescription ends by making labour not only disreputable in the eyes of the community, but morally impossible to the noble, freeborn man, and incompatible with a worthy life.

(Veblen, 1970, 44,45)

In this passage Veblen claims that the leisure class, and American society at that time, associated the avoidance of productive work with wealth, and wealth with social status. Further, those with

wealth also had leisure, which makes conspicuous leisure, in current terminology, a prestige symbol. By calling attention to the accepted ideology of the time, the accepted associations between conspicuous leisure and status, Veblen could rightly be called the precursor and the instigator of the systematic analyses of leisure consumption that followed him.

David Riesman was one sociologist inspired by Veblen, and he to addressed himself to questions concerning the relationships between American culture, the individual, and leisure consumption. In an article entitled, "Leisure and Work in Postindustrial Society", found in Abundance for What?, Riesman retains much of Veblen's approach of analyzing the relationship between social class and leisure consumption, while taking a perceptive look at the meaning of leisure consumption for particular groups:

... it is among the less privileged groups relatively new to leisure and consumption that its (these groups) zest for possessions retains something of its pristine energy. With very little hope of making work more meaningful, these people look to their leisure time and consumership for the satisfactions and pride denied them by the social order...

(Riesman, 1964, 179)

Like Veblen, Riesman believes that leisure consumption must be seen in relation to work and the "social order", although for Riesman, leisure consumption is now perceived as a mass palliative sought in order to make up for lack of meaning denied by

unstimulating work and class barriers; it is no longer a phenomenon limited to a leisured class.

At the same time, Riesman urges that changes should be made in leisure consumption, particularly in the consumption of mass culture, and he seems to suggest that what is needed is a change in the nature of work:

... our society offers little in the way of re-education for those who have been torn away from their traditional culture and suddenly exposed to all the blandishments of mass culture. (Riesman, 1964, 165)

Such considerations concerning the limits of leisure suggest that it might be easier to make leisure more meaningful if one at the same time could make work more demanding. (Riesman, 1964, 170)

What I am asking for now are explorations in reorganizing work itself so that man can live humanely on as well as off the job. (Riesman, 1964, 174)

In our view, Riesman sees leisure consumption as a substitution for meaning once found in work, and suggests that this meaning has eroded with the banalization of work.

Riesman's analysis is important in that he is sensitive to the mythical role of leisure consumption for diverse social

groups, while pleading at the same time for a reconsideration of the meaning of consumption in relation to other meaning systems. In this light he could be considered an important figure in the field of leisure consumer education. The question of the mythical role of leisure consumption is considered by Riesman in the following passage:

And I want to repeat that millions of Americans, perhaps still the great majority, find sufficient vitality in pursuit of that dream: the trip to the end of the consumer rainbow retains its magic for the previously deprived. Yet, by concentrating all energies on preserving freedom from want and pressing for consumer satiation at ever more opulent levels, we jeopardize this achievement in a world where there are many more poor nations than rich ones and in which there are many more desires, even among ourselves, for things other than abundance. (Riesman, 1964, 183)

Riesman has clearly demonstrated an awareness of the magical hold that consumption has on individuals and society, although another author has perhaps more clearly seen the inner workings of this slight-of-hand.

A French sociologist-economist, Jean Baudrillard, has pushed the analysis of the mechanisms of consumption even further, as well as intensifying the criticism of consumption in general, and leisure consumption in particular. At the same time he has extended Veblen's and Riesman's analyses of the relationships

between social class and forms of consumption into the more specific domain of social groups' representation, and construction of identity through the consumption of objects and experiences. For Baudrillard, consumption is essentially the consumption of symbols.

Using a semantic type of analysis, Baudrillard states that objects and leisure consumption are signs or symbols, the individual internalizing the meaning, the signifié (signified), in relation to the symbol's meaning for a reference group. He says:

Reprenons ici le principe lévi-straussien: ce qui confère à la consommation son caractère de fait social, ce n'est pas ce qu'elle conserve apparemment de la nature (la satisfaction, la jouissance), c'est la démarche essentielle par laquelle elle s'en sépare (ce qui la définit comme code, comme institution, comme système d'organisation). De même que le système de parenté n'est pas fondé en dernière instance sur la consanguinité et la filiation, sur une donnée naturelle, mais sur une ordonnance arbitraire de classification--ainsi le système de la consommation n'est pas fondé en dernière instance sur le besoin et la jouissance, mais sur un code de signes (d'objets/signes) et de différences.

(Baudrillard, 1970, 110)

Baudrillard treats consumption as a language, a symbolic meaning system. Baudrillard explains that an object of

consumption--examples would be a suntan, vacation trip, sailboat, or concert--often has two functions: a practical one, but more importantly, a function as a sign or symbol:

... hors du champ de sa fonction objective, où il est irremplacable, hors du champ de sa détonation, l'objet devient substituable de façon plus ou moins illimitée dans le champ des connotations, où il prend valeur de signe. Ainsi la machine à laver sert comme ustensile et joue comme élément de confort, de prestige, etc. C'est proprement ce dernier champ qui est celui de la consommation. Ici toutes sortes d'autres objets peuvent se substituer à la machine à laver comme élément significatif. Dans la logique des signes comme dans celle des symboles, les objets ne sont plus du tout liés à une fonction ou à un besoin défini. Précisément parce qu'ils répondent à tout autre chose, qui est soit la logique sociale, soit la logique du désir, auxquels ils servent de champ mouvant et inconscient de signification.

(Baudrillard, 1970, 106,107)

These pragmatic, and beyond them, the symbolic functions of consumption, are well illustrated by the following example.

The possibility of taking a dip in the family pool on a hot summer day is evidently refreshing, and physically a welcome change of environment. However, apart from these pragmatic functions, there are also the pool's symbolic functions. In its

symbolic role, a swimming pool may convey a wide spectrum of meanings, ranging from affluence, sociability, class conformity, possession of time to swim and tan, to a demonstration of adherence to contemporary beliefs concerning physical fitness. The backyard swimming pool, and leisure consumption in general, is not limited to pragmatic functions. It fulfills a multiplicity of symbolic and social functions.

The term itself, leisure consumption, is given a wide range of meaning by Baudrillard. It refers as much to time as it does to experiences and objects.

Le temps est une denrée rare, précieuse, soumise aux lois de la valeur d'échange. Ceci est clair pour le temps de travail, puisqu'il est vendu et acheté. Mais de plus en plus le temps libre lui-même doit être, pour être "consommé", directement ou indirectement acheté....

Le temps découpable, abstrait, chronométré, devient ainsi homogène au système de la valeur d'échange; il y rentre au même titre que n'importe quel objet.

(Baudrillard, 1970,242)

For Baudrillard, the purchase of means to produce "free" time (commodities that can save time such as frozen orange juice, washing machines) are as much leisure consumption as are sailboats and suntans.

In addition to the semantic-type analysis that Baudrillard makes of consumption, can be found a critical analysis of the myth

that consumption leads to satisfaction. In our terms, we would say that Baudrillard identifies the consumer's problem as a contradiction between what the consumer wants, or is lead to believe he wants, and the actual state of affairs. Specifically, the individual imagines that he needs what an object or service can do for him, rather than realizing that he is really paying an entrance fee to a social group by means of the fact that a particular group may be associated with particular objects or services. The author argues that consumption, and we could specify leisure consumption, does not possess a pure, natural, intrinsic value for the individual, but is pursued because of its denotative potential in a universal process of group membership and social differentiation. He notes:

... si l'on admet par contre que le besoin n'est jamais tant le besoin de tel objet que le "besoin" de différence (le désir du sens social), alors on comprendra qu'il ne puisse jamais y avoir de satisfaction accomplie, ni donc de définition du besoin. (Baudrillard, 1970, 108)

Baudrillard also looks at Riesman's notion of the "fun morality," agreeing that the necessity to have pleasure becomes another constraint on the individual (Baudrillard, 1970, 112). In regards to this search for pleasure and happiness, he explains: "C'est le principe de maximisation de l'existence par multiplication des contacts, des relations, par usage intensif de signes, d'objets, par l'exploitation systématique de toutes les virtualités de jouissance." (Baudrillard, 1970, 112). It is reasonable to infer

from Baudrillard's analysis of consumption that he feels that the present means of searching for pleasure through leisure consumption is a hollow illusion; society has taken a wrong turn.

His final judgement concerning the desirability of this state of affairs is quite adamant; "L'opulence, l'"affluence" n'est en effet que l'accumulation des signes du bonheur." (Baudrillard, 1970, 27). According to Baudrillard, happiness through affluence is an illusion, a myth; real meaning is elsewhere.

More recently, Guy Aznar in Non aux loisirs, Non à la retraite agrees with Baudrillard's analysis of leisure consumption, but his conclusions lead to concrete suggestions aimed at improving the situation. In taking a poetic and creative look at leisure consumption, Aznar first proposes a Refus Global of the leisure myth. Clearly influenced by Baudrillard's works, he states:

Et l'angoisse du vide devient telle que la demande essentielle est de remplir le creux. La "vacance" du temps libre a tout à fait logiquement donné naissance à l'industrie du remplissage.

Remplissage par des marchandises achetées, bien sûr, ce qui permet au loisir de cadrer parfaitement avec les principes de la société de consommation des objets et des signes. (Aznar, 1978, 26)

Like Riesman, Aznar does not end simply by noting that leisure consumption is intertwined with our meaning systems and

our search for meaning, he proposes that constructive change could be brought about by re-examining the work-leisure relationship. He first lays bare the contradiction of the leisure-work opposition. He would diversify the search for meaning and satisfaction; instead of putting all one's eggs in the leisure consumption basket, he substitutes other baskets, such as new personally involved forms of work, play, and communal activities.

In retrospect, these four authors, Veblen, Riesman, Baudrillard, and Aznar exhibit a two-pronged analysis of the social nature of consumption. On the one hand they identify various social factors and mechanisms that influence leisure consumption. Proceeding by means of general observation and analysis, they attempt to relate leisure consumption to its role in providing social status and prestige (Veblen); as a palliative for work, and as a particular form of mass culture (Riesman); as a symbol, a means for social groups to differentiate between themselves, (Baudrillard); and finally, as a search to meaningfully fill time (Aznar). For these authors, leisure consumption is intimately related to social status, group differentiation, symbolic communication, or economic exploitation of free time.

On the other hand, these authors identify a number of problems faced by the leisure consumer, although often this identification takes the form of criticism of a particular facet of leisure consumption. C. W. Mills infers from Veblen's writing that Veblen sees leisure consumption as wasteful in terms of

inefficiently used time, resources, and human energy; for Riesman, leisure consumption does not permit an elevation of the human condition; in Baudrillard's opinion, individuals are unaware of the symbolic functions of consumption, and considers leisure of consumption to be an illusion of happiness; and for Aznar, leisure consumption lacks meaning because it is not affectively invested time.

The analyses of two other authors can be added in order to complement the above viewpoints. Steffan Linder and Alain Laurent build their cases more from empirical observation, rather than from introspection and analysis, as did the preceding authors. Steffan Linder, in The Harried Leisure Class, looks at a number of characteristics of American life, and comes to the conclusion that leisure consumption leads to a less leisurely life. Alain Laurent in Libérer les Vacances? takes a close-up look at the Club Méditerranée, exposing the means by which it is able to regulate and exploit the vacation of their clients. Our main interest here is the additional criticism that they bring against leisure consumption.

Linder points out that our thirst for increased and more intensive leisure consumption is making us less leisurely; we are not taking time to savour our leisure experiences.

Consumption is being accelerated to increase the yield on time devoted to consumption. There is naturally a risk that an increased goods intensity and the allied reallocation of time will in fact

lead to the opposite result, or at least not provide optimum satisfaction. We know that wealth is no guarantee of happiness. (Linder, 1970, 91)

Somewhat paradoxically, Linder effectively argues the point that increased leisure consumption leads to harried leisure. Also, in the same vein as Baudrillard, he notes that leisure consumption "is no guarantee of happiness."

Laurent takes a hard look at vacations in France, particularly those promoted by the Club Méditerranée. He states that the organization seduces its clientel by selling--and proposing itself as the sole provider of--"a hedonistic and playful horizon" (Laurent, 1973, 121). His main criticism of organized vacations, and what he would like to see happen, are found in the following statements:

... les clubs commerciaux réduisent le vacancier à l'état d'enfant--pour le plus grand profit des organisateurs... (Laurent, 1973, 222)

La révolution vacancière ne prendra vraiment corps que lorsque les individus sentiront que le possible des vacances est de pouvoir s'approprier le temps, devenir artisan de leur existence et créateur de leurs vacances--un peu comme un artiste crée son oeuvre. (Laurent, 1973, 236).

For Laurent, the clientel of organized vacations have been sold a plethora of myths, ranging from the belief that the agency will make dreams come true, to creating dependance on the part of

vacationers--and preventing them from realizing their dreams themselves.

Linder and Laurent bring new additions to the criticisms proposed by Veblen, Riesman, Baudrillard, and Aznar regarding the existence of a leisure consumption problem. Linder wonders about the decreasing quantity and quality of the time that we devote to our leisure experiences, and Laurent examines the manipulated aspirations and the dependence of vacationers who use vacation agencies.

All of the authors suggest that a leisure consumption problem exists, and together they identify several of the forms that it takes. Two main problems underlie these views. The first is common to other forms of consumption, although it is perhaps more acute in leisure consumption: it is unconsciously used as a symbol in a search for social identity, thereby losing its "disinterested" nature. Individuals think that they are buying goods or services because of their functional properties, without questioning the symbolic motives that are often behind these purchases. This naivety is then exploited by the economic force.

The second problem is that leisure consumption is expected to bring pleasure, satisfaction, meaning, and rewards of a social or individual nature, but, unexpectedly, it often leads to dissatisfaction: dependence, vicious circles of consumption and new desires, disappointments, or sentiments of being harried. For all these authors, and for the individuals that they observe, leisure consumption is not meeting the humanistic ideal that is

reserved for it; it does not provide the meaning and substance that is expected of it.

1.2.4 Psychological Influences

Although in the preceding section we identified the existence of a leisure consumption problem consisting of a lack of satisfaction and disappointment, it is possible to go further in understanding the psychological mechanisms that lead to this problem.

Rolf Meyersohn includes a discussion of this basic problem, in an article entitled, "Abundance Reconsidered". He takes a look at three authors who have critically analyzed the myth of abundance, although his insights into the scarcity of satisfaction, inspired by Tibor Scitovsky's The Joyless Economy are most pertinent here. Meyersohn states:

What is new is that the "hunger of imagination" has become so widespread. Until a consumer society was developed, satiation, fatigue, or dissatisfaction could not erupt on a large scale, most people and most societies were too poor to worry about such problems. But now there is concern about diminished satisfaction as a wide-spread problem. "The most serious scarcity in our time ... is a scarcity of satisfactions," according to Michael Kammen's recent essay "From Scarcity to Abundance--to Scarcity?" It is this

sentiment that Scitovsky voices in The Joyless Economy. He bemoans the growing pursuit of comfort, which in his view has driven out pleasure. (in Gans, ed., 1979, 89)

Meyersohn agrees with Scitovsky that deep, heart-felt satisfaction is rare, and that the abundance of comfort may be eliminating real pleasure.

However, Meyersohn veers away from an explanation of dissatisfaction which stems from either false expectations or else from being spoiled. Rather, he suggests:

By providing a sociological context for individual behavior, the Bergers, Kellner, and Sennett fill in the missing element in Scitovsky's analysis. The precipitating problem for scarcity of satisfaction derives not from false expectations or from being spoiled Americans, but from the inevitable strains that come out of the absence of communal meaning and of languishing too long in the private sphere. The result might be psychological deprivations, what Scitovsky would call "spoiled," and Sennett more accurately describes as the life of narcissism. (in Gans, ed., 1979, 91)

According to Meyersohn, dissatisfaction with consumption is a symptom, a surface appearance of tensions arising from an unbalanced search for meaning between the private and public spheres of life, a search that has been tipped in favour of the private sphere. For a critical and detailed discussion of the

private/public concept, one could also refer to John Wilson (1980).

In order to illustrate this viewpoint, we could consider a recent phenomenon, the dramatic increase in cross-country skiing. Although a number of factors can be retained in understanding its rise in popularity, among them the marketing done by ski centres and ski equipment manufacturers, and the numerous symbols and messages that the activity transmits, it is also true that cross-country skiing often takes place within a social context. It allows families and friends to engage in social interaction. Meyersohn would perhaps argue that since our meaning systems have become unbalanced in favour of the private sphere, that the rise in the popularity of cross-country skiing is partly due to the social contact that people find in the activity. This situation would provide an example of an attempt to stabilize one's meaning systems, with meaning now being sought in the public sphere.

Although this analysis might aid in identifying a contributing factor in the rise of cross-country skiing, we would also argue that the narcissistic reasons that lead to leisure consumption dissatisfaction, in their connection with private meaning systems, must also be investigated. If cross country skiing responds to a search for meaning in the public sphere, it also promises to satisfy strictly individual interests. The person who appreciates natural forms, the smell of the woods, tranquility, or even solitude and freedom of movement will go to great lengths to satisfy these interests. How is it possible that

these types of desires become narcissistic and self-defeating?

A problem arises when the need for tranquility, certain types of terrain, speed, or specialized equipment (in the case of cross-country skiing) dissimulates the hidden costs of these needs. These desires often incur unexpected costs, such as time expenditure, transportation and equipment expenses, or even the need to follow a physical conditioning programme. To illustrate, a novice skier might obtain a great deal of satisfaction with the pair of skis from his first experience, with no more than a 20 dollar pair of skis. A year later, when somewhat used to this experience, he buys a better pair of skis since these are advertised as being more efficient, and as requiring less effort. What has happened is that he is attempting to regain the diminishing satisfactions of the skiing experience. Perhaps two years later, he invests in racing skis for similar reasons. Meanwhile, he has two pairs of unused skis in the closet, and finds that the free time he used to have is now taken up by a physical conditioning programme. Evidently, if the individual had been able to foresee the hidden costs due to the escalating nature of his search for satisfaction, he may have decided to act differently.

In our opinion, leisure consumption problems arise when either the symbolic or appreciation motivations gain the upper hand and exclude all other considerations--particularly those that we have called the hidden costs. Earlier on in this paper, we discussed an example of the symbols and associated connotations that may be sought in the purchase of a swimming pool. The

importance of these rewards may easily prevent the consumer from being fully conscious of the amount of time and money that upkeep of a pool requires. Nor was the skier, in his search for an exhilarating ski experience perhaps fully aware of what this was costing him either financially or in terms of "leisurely time." It is important to emphasize that leisure consumption often brings unforeseen consequences, or hidden costs, and that these costs are perhaps rendered invisible because of the motivations of leisure consumers.

We have slipped through Meyersohn's analysis of the lack of meaning involved in consumption, into a discussion of the motives of leisure consumers. We shall now turn to a more formal analysis of the motives of the leisure consumer.

First and foremost, an individual is likely to engage in leisure consumption that fulfills at least some of his needs or expectations of leisure in general. Whether one develops these needs or expectations because of leisure consumption, is impossible to determine with present uni-temporal research methods. Nonetheless, one could be encouraged to adopt or augment one's consumption with the promise that one's needs or expectations would be fulfilled by a particular object or activity. It is also reasonable to assume that leisure consumption continues or is repeated because one anticipates a certain satisfaction, and these anticipations are at least partially formed by expectations and needs.

Satisfaction, needs, and expectations, are covered by the

umbrella term "motive," as employed by Engel et al. They define the term and go on to explain that it is an important element in understanding consumer behavior:

A lifetime of learning and experience obviously will serve to reinforce certain patterns of behavior that are beneficial either in giving pleasure or reducing discomfort and pain. These, in turn become embedded in one's basic personality as motives--enduring predispositions that direct behavior toward attaining certain goals. Motives function both to arouse behavior initially and to direct it toward desired outcomes..... One essential role for marketing research, therefore, is to uncover dominant motives and thereby provide clues for the development of products and sales appeals that will be regarded as motive satisfying by the consumer. (Engel et al., 1978, 220)

If marketing research attempts to uncover motives which can be exploited, increasing the consumers' vulnerability, an important element of consumer education should be making consumers aware of this practice.

A number of researchers have investigated the aspirations, needs expectations, and satisfactions sought and found in leisure in general. Since leisure consumption is a major leisure form, the results of these studies can be used as indications of the motivations behind leisure consumption. Some caution should be taken though, since certain motivations could be more or less

present in leisure consumption, or in particular forms of leisure consumption (for instance, vacations versus buying records).

In a study carried out with the aid of 387 randomly chosen subjects in Trois-Rivières, a medium-sized city in the Province of Québec, Gaetan Ouellet asked respondents to rate the importance of a number of needs that could be met in one's leisure time. Subjects gave a score of one to six on a Likert-type scale, from no importance to very great importance, in relation to fifty items. The means were tabulated, and the five items with the lowest and the highest scores were as follows:

rank	mean	item
1	4.84	amuse oneself, entertainment
2	4.7	share one's activities with pleasant people
3	4.6	be with pleasant people
4	4.6	obtain a lot of pleasure
5	4.51	to do mostly as one pleases
46	2.29	do demanding exercises
47	2.25	be worthy of honours and trophies
48	2.22	hold real power over others
49	2.06	put oneself in dangerous situations
50	1.95	isolate oneself from others

In Trois-Rivières then, (a city that is most likely representative of the province), the most generalized expectations of leisure deal with entertainment, pleasure, pleasant social contact, and liberty from other constraints. On the other hand,

Québécois, in their leisure time, are not interested in heavy physical workouts, honours, danger, isolation, or holding power. These "non-needs" are generally the inverse of the needs, since isolation is the contrary of social contact, exercises and honours represent the necessity of making an effort, power is somewhat antithetical to pleasant, relaxed social relations, and danger is not generally considered as pleasurable. These needs and non-needs, in our opinion, reflect the general expectations of the Québécois population in regards to leisure.

An important implication follows from these observations. Forms of leisure consumption that promise to deliver entertainment, pleasure, pleasant social contact, or liberty are likely to attract the greatest numbers of consumers. In fact, we could hypothesize that the closer the association between an object or an activity and these qualities, the more it will become adopted and widespread. Leisure consumer education should then question whether a particular activity or object necessarily or automatically leads to the fulfilment of these general expectations.

A flagrant example of the above process at work is found in beer advertisements. Beer is mostly consumed in one's leisure time, and not surprisingly, the product is presented in a decor where a number of the above leisure expectations are being met. The social aspect is often present through a family reunion or gathering of friends. Smiles and song represent pleasure, and because of the festival-like atmosphere, the whole affair seems

quite entertaining. Beer consumption then is given a magical status, it is as though drinking it will conjure up and procure all these "leisure" qualities. For a detailed explanation of these processes, see Castonguay (1978). On the other hand, our perceptions of the leisure situation are also changed; for many, a gathering of friends or a camping expedition is now incomplete without the ubiquitous bottle.

The marketing expert, when attempting to sell a product, would say that he, in addition to arousing the attention of the consumer through his general interests, needs to consider the particular interests of a target group. This segment is then solicited by playing on the individual's particular interests or characteristics. For example, the beer advertisement will attempt to specifically interest all beer drinkers, but will also suggest that among them those with certain characteristics and interests should buy brand X. This is an illustration at the same time of Baudrillard's principle, namely that if the use of a product is associated with a particular group, then the buyer of that product differentiates himself from the mass of consumers, and at the same time identifies with that particular group. The reason for this discussion is that leisure consumers also have particular interests and expectations. In addition to generalized leisure expectations, the leisure consumer is also vulnerable to appeals that concern his more particular, individual interests.

Using the same list of fifty leisure needs previously mentioned, Gaetan Ouellet postulated, and verified with factor

analysis, six forms of leisure needs (Ouellet, 1980, 135-140). He called these: status, self-realization, ambiance, risk, liberty, and social participation. An individual would be classified as a status seeker, for example, if he scored relatively high in this area in comparison with the others. However, a person could be considered as relatively high in more than one area.

In a study oriented towards identifying leisure life-styles, rather than needs, Andreasen and Belk grouped individuals into "leisure-specific life-style categories" using a Q-type factor analysis (Andreasen and Belk, 1980, 114). For these authors, leisure life-style consisted of leisure activities, interests, and opinions. The study went on to correlate a particular leisure life-style group with the possibility of interesting this group in increased arts attendance. The ultimate purpose was to direct marketing efforts towards those groups that could be encouraged to consume arts performances. Although the concept of life style is different from leisure needs, the point is that the presence of characteristics that distinguish one consumer from another indicate that leisure consumers have individualized interests. To some extent it is these differences that render consumers more or less vulnerable to social or marketing influences.

An important study into the satisfaction derived from leisure activities was conducted by Douglass Hawes. The study was carried out on a wide cross sample of married Americans. The objective of the study was to examine the "felt benefits" of leisure.

There is a need to understand what is being

achieved through the "consumption process" (Lancaster, 1966) of participation, so that facilities, hardware, experiences, and activities may be tailored toward more specific desires or goals of participants. This in turn would lead to a more effective and efficient "consumption process", and a more rational supportable basis for allocation. It is certainly intuitively evident that the consumer is interested in the satisfaction to be derived from the use (or ownership) of facilities and supporting hardware, rather than the physical characteristics of the hardware itself. Campgrounds and tennis rackets are, in fact, only means to an end--not an end in and of themselves. (Hawes, 1978, 249)

Hawes makes a number of other contributions to the understanding of leisure consumers' motives. Here again, the focus of the study is somewhat different from the other two (Ouellet, and Andreasen and Belk), since it is concerned with satisfaction, defined as perceived benefits of a leisure activity, rather than as general leisure needs per se. As we have mentioned, though, satisfactions are directly related to motives.

The methodology of the research permits the establishment of the most important satisfactions derived from a particular activities. Because of this approach, it would be theoretically possible to select only activities that one considered to be leisure consumption, and to tabulate the dominant satisfactions

related to them (Hawes, 1978, 258-260). In keeping with our interest in the various types of satisfaction, though, it is relevant to note that Hawes found five major types for each of the sexes:

Married women appear to seek people contact, novelty, memories, and stronger family relations in their favorite activity, whereas married men seek challenge, mastery, control, recognition and independence. (Hawes, 1980, 262)

Hawes himself draws the marketing conclusions that this sort of knowledge permits: "The results of this study imply many opportunities for market segmentation and product positioning based upon the satisfactions derived by specific subgroups within the population, rather than merely on the basis of the pursuit per se." (Hawes 1978, 263). The individual can be reassured (or warned!) that if he searches for a type of satisfaction that a marketing expert has determined to be characteristic of a potential clientele, then he has increased vulnerability to stimuli and products that promise to satisfy this search.

The three preceeding studies by Ouellet, Andreasen and Belk, and Hawes are only a few examples of research that attempt to understand and classify the motives of the leisure consumer (see also Tinsley and Richard, 1978; London, Crandall, Fitzgibbons, 1977; and Ragheb, 1980). Although they study different facets of the motive perspective, namely needs, lifestyles, and satisfaction respectively, they all look for associations, or types of motive. Andreasen and Belk, and Hawes then go on to relate these motives

to specific leisure activities, as well as pointing out the implications for marketing purposes. Here, the problem for leisure consumers is the increased psychological pressure to buy, that results from their leisure motives. An object or service appears, or is made to appear, to satisfy various interests, making it difficult for the consumer to refuse.

This problem is compounded when one considers that leisure consumption has to be fun--what Reisman calls the "fun morality." Any activity that detracts from this pleasure--including the effort that is needed to make a critical assessment of the situation--runs against the nature of leisure consumption. For example, buying a washing machine is ordinary, whereas buying a vacation is in itself tantalizing. A washing machine offers little promise for pleasure, whereas a vacation is by definition pleasurable. And who finds it easy to resist an offer of fun, let alone subtract from that fun by the effort required to answer questions concerning how much one can afford to pay for a vacation, what kind is desired, where to go, what to do, and so on? It would be relatively common, though, to formulate these types of questions when purchasing a washing machine. For these reasons, we can hypothesize that the consumer is relatively more vulnerable when purchasing leisure, than in other sectors of consumption.

1.3 Resume

The preceeding review of the literature that discusses

leisure consumption has justified our initial framework, which suggests that leisure consumption can be analyzed in relation to the action of four forces. It was suggested that these forces, and specific factors and mechanisms that comprise these forces, are responsible for a number of leisure consumption problems. A resume of the discussion concerning these forces, factors or mechanisms, and related problems is found in the following table.

Resume of the Forces, Factors or Mechanisms, and Problems Related to Leisure Consumption

<u>Force</u>	<u>Factors or Mechanisms</u>	<u>Associated Problems</u>
Economic Influences	leisure expenditures are a function of income	access to leisure consumption
	channelling of the leisure instinct into economically exploitable forms	pressures to engage in leisure forms that do necessarily respond to the interests of the individual
	leisure consumption is one of the goals of industrialized society	exploitation of the worker's energies; the individual works to consume
	leisure consumption is encouraged through marketing programmes and advertising in particular	pressures to consume; consumption does not respond to "needs", but rather to production

	a profit motive, rather than a service motive on the part of manufacturers and merchants	(a number of specific problems that will be discussed in Chapter 2)
Political Influences	government intervention as (1) regulatory mechanism	laws that do not take into account the particular nature of leisure consumption
		consumers that do not avail themselves of laws that already exist
	(2) para-economic producer of leisure goods and services	problems of egalitarian distribution
		goods and services that do not correspond to diverse interests of the population
		institutions that promote leisure forms that correspond to their own interests
Social Influences	leisure consumption is a function of education, race, and life cycle position	unequal access to leisure consumption

	consumption of symbols that serve as indicators of social group membership	unconscious purchase of goods and services for their symbolic value increased vulnerability to marketing programmes
	leisure consumption is a search for meaning not found in work	leisure consumption becomes a palliative, a substitute for work that lacks meaning
	the cultural norm of the desirability of new and varied experiences requires time	the harried leisure consumer
	various organizations plan to the last detail the consumption experience	loss of opportunity for creative and spontaneous leisure experiences
Psycholo- gical Influences	to keep a given level of satisfaction requires increasing time or money expenditures	consumers are unaware of the hidden costs, and do not question the individualistic principle that underlies this vicious circle
	the motives of leisure consumers, both collective and group specific	the exploitation of these by marketing programmes

	the reintegration of market-
	ing "norms" as individual
	and social norms
the pleasure expected of	the individual is more
leisure consumption	vulnerable in leisure
inhibits a critical	consumption in comparison
attitude	with other consumption
	domains

The preceding table summarizes the factors or mechanisms and problems that are identified by a number of authors in relation to leisure consumption. This resume corresponds to an analysis that provides basic understanding of the factors that contribute to leisure consumption problems. This understanding is necessary in order that action of an educational nature will be effective in combating the problems of the leisure consumer.

The problems that we have noted are, nonetheless, to some extent hypothetical. The question remains as to what extent individuals themselves actually experience tensions in relation to leisure consumption. The following chapter will partially respond to the need for this type of information. It will permit the verification of several of our hypotheses, while pushing further our understanding of the nature of leisure consumption problems. This will be achieved through an analysis of leisure-related problems noted by consumers themselves.

Chapter 2

Problems Reported by the Consumers Themselves

2.1 Introduction

The methodology of the present study is based upon Kaufman's notion that sound education must be anchored on the identification and analysis of the problems to be overcome (Kaufman, 1972). In Kaufman's terms, knowledge of a discrepancy, and the reasons for a discrepancy between a desired state and the actual one will help assure effective intervention in reducing that discrepancy. In this chapter, we will identify and analyze various tensions that the leisure consumer himself experiences.

One of the most important sources of information concerning the rift between the ideal and the reality of leisure consumption is the consumer himself. If problems exist in relation to leisure consumption, then they should be revealed by studying the individual. Indeed, if the consumer more or less spontaneously reports disappointment or frustration, then there is all the more

reason to believe that problems exist and that they deserve attention. The consumer may not be able to explain why they are there, nor even be aware of all the problems that he may actually have, yet if one is reported, it must be considered significant in itself. In addition, the researcher must consider the possibility that a reported problem is symptomatic of still others. In short, problems reported by the consumer are not the only possible ones--a number of those discussed in Chapter 1 cannot be fully studied by this method--but they do serve to indicate that something is amiss. Interpretation is then required to indicate the value and the limits of this information.

Few authors or studies, unfortunately, have systematically attempted either to describe or investigate leisure consumption problems of the individual, or to study them in relation to other sectors of consumption, i.e., housing, food, or transportation. One important exception is a recent (1976-1980) study carried out in Québec by Jean-Guy Belley, Jacques Hamel, and Claude Masse. Although this study did not solely investigate leisure consumption problems, a secondary analysis will permit the isolation of these problems.

This particular research is important to our own study for a number of reasons. The study will permit us to:

- (1) introduce a working definition of leisure consumption problems,
- (2) explore the differences in characteristics of leisure consumption problems compared with non-leisure problems,

- (3) specify our own hypotheses concerning the factors that affect leisure consumption problems,
- (4) identify the potential effects of a particular form of leisure consumer education in relation to specific target groups.

The two principle results of our secondary analysis of the study by Belley et al. will be to provide additional information concerning the characteristics of leisure consumption problems and the possible effects of a particular approach to education.

One possible form of education, particularly in relation to the familiar consumption problems of equipment breakdown, or poor service, would be to increase the individual's possession of what Belley et al. call defence mechanisms. Among others, these mechanisms include careful shopping and knowledge of possible action to be carried out when one does experience a problem. Although leisure consumer education need not necessarily concentrate on all mechanisms, these would, nevertheless, seem to offer solutions to certain problems. Moreover, in the analysis carried out by Herrmann (1979) of the main components of consumer education, the author indicates that historically, consumer education has repeatedly aimed at improving the consumer's defence mechanisms as identified by Belley et al. Since leisure consumer education is still in its formative stages, an examination of the effect of these mechanisms on the evolution of leisure consumer problems would certainly seem to be useful. It is possible that these mechanisms have the same apparent effect on leisure problems as that indicated by the analyses of Belley et al. in relation to non-leisure problems. Although we will later provide detailed

discussion of the effect of these mechanisms, these authors found that individuals with a high level of defence mechanisms were essentially more conscious of their consumption problems in general. It remains to be seen whether this observation holds true for leisure problems in particular.

Throughout the following discussion, there is one principal limitation of the study by Belley et al. that must be kept in mind. Although the authors have included in their investigation a number of leisure consumption problems that are connected either to the relationship between consumer and merchant or consumer and producer, or to the frustrations felt by disadvantaged leisure consumers, a number of other possible problems that we identified in Chapter 1 have been excluded.

In addition to these untreated problems, the authors themselves note the limitations of their research particularly with respect to two other areas. First, the authors excluded those difficulties related to an individual's desire to cancel a sale because he acted impulsively or without considering the consequences. Unfortunately, this type of question could have been of particular significance in relation to the leisure field, in determining whether leisure related purchases are relatively more impulsive and less thought through than in other consumption sectors.

A second limitation of the study in relation to our own definition of leisure consumption is that the study did not investigate the frequency or type of problem experienced by

consumers and non-consumers of public leisure goods and services. For this reason, we cannot include here specific analyses of problems that may be experienced by the user of municipal, provincial, or federal leisure facilities or services.

2.2 The Problems Investigated

Type 1: Problems due to the Relationship Between Consumer and Merchant or Producer

One of the most commonly criticized aspects of the consumer society is the relationship existing between the buyer and the producer or merchant. Complaints to the effect that goods or services are too costly, that an item broke down too early, or that it was damaged during delivery, or that goods or services did not function, produce benefits or cost as advertised, refer to consumers' expectations that are unmet by the producer or merchant.

Tensions existing in the relationship between consumer and merchant or producer was one of the two broad types of problems investigated by Belley et al. The authors qualified this type of problem as being a contractual one, since the term refers to difficulties met by the consumer after the moment of purchase or rental of an item (Belley et al., 1980, 2). As the authors point out, this restriction limited the problems examined to those due to unsatisfactory relations (in a broad sense) between merchants, producers, and consumers. For example, problems considered as

belonging to the contractual category were: high prices, the seller's promises (misleading advertising), difficulty obtaining credit, problems with delivery, quality of services, breakdown of goods, and so on. This aspect of the study considered consumption problems as tensions perceived by the individual in relation to the purchase and utilization of goods and services (Belley et al., 1980, 9).

In our own terms, these reported problems represent a discrepancy between the consumer's expectations and his experience in relation to the economic force. The consumer expects that goods or services will have a certain quality and be marketed according to implicit rules. When these rules or ententes are violated, the consumer experiences disappointment or frustration. Belley et al. have simply categorized various sources of this dissatisfaction.

However, neither the report by Belley et al, nor other research allows us to hypothesize whether disappointment is more or less frequent, or more intense for leisure related goods or services. For this reason, we will substitute the following questions for research hypotheses.

1. Are leisure-related problems more or less frequent than for other goods and services?
2. What are the possible factors that may lead to any observed differences?
3. Are the presence of defence mechanisms a pertinent factor in the apparition and evolution of leisure and other

consumption problems?

An answer to the first question is important in evaluating the relative extent to which consumers are consciously experiencing leisure consumption problems (even though they may not be identified as such). The second question aims at identifying the reasons for which certain consumers may be more prone to report such problems. This information will aid in matching the content of leisure consumer education with a specific clientele. The third question is an important one, in that an answer would aid in predicting the possible effects of one possible facet of a consumer education programme on the evolution and final results of leisure consumption problems. An analysis of these questions will be taken up in detail under the Discussion section.

Type 2 Problems: Frustrations due to the Lack of Leisure Consumption

In formulating their conceptual framework, Belley et al. state that a consumption problem also exists in the form of frustrations or deprivations due to a lack of consumption. Posing the problem in terms similar to those of a 1958 study by Tremblay and Fortin, the authors state:

Cependant, il n'en reste pas moins que l'inégalité des ressources entre groupes sociaux demeure toujours particulièrement grave et importante. Il y a donc une sorte de contradiction structurelle profonde dans la société de consommation entre d'une part, l'universalisation de plus en plus généralisée des besoins et aspirations et, d'autre

part, l'incapacité objective des structures sociales et économiques à y répondre d'une manière tout aussi généralisée pour l'ensemble des groupes sociaux.

(Belley et al., 1980, 9)

The authors go on to note that the have-nots are hit particularly hard, being frustrated by the impossibility of becoming integrated into the consumer society. In other words, the desire for various goods and services is increasingly standardized across social groups, although the reality of having these goods or services is not equally universal. In relation to leisure, this means that expectations and hopes concerning the acquisition and use of leisure goods and services are not realized by certain social classes.

The problem here is not the gap between the expected quality or price of the goods or services, etc., and the consumer's real experience (Type 1), but rather the discrepancy between social-cultural consumption expectations and the individual's real ability to procure leisure goods or services (Type 2). With Type 2 frustration, therefore, the origin of the frustration is the inability to acquire a leisure good or service that is socially defined as desirable. A Type 2 problem would appear then to be more persistent than a Type 1 problem.

The empirical analyses carried out by Belley et al. allow us to formulate specific hypotheses in relation to the Type 2 problem.

1. Leisure consumption varies significantly according to

education, occupation, income, and age.

2. Although the authors do not analyze the deprivations felt by low level leisure consumers, we hypothesize that low level leisure consumers feel significantly more deprived of leisure than others.
3. When low level leisure consumers do report a leisure consumption problem (Type 1), it is considered to be more serious than for those with relatively high leisure consumption.

Verification of the preceding hypotheses will allow us to confirm that particular social classes have relatively low levels of leisure consumption, as we suggested in Chapter 1. Also, those with low levels of leisure consumption feel deprived in terms of leisure, and when they do report a problem, it has greater chances of being considered serious. Although hypotheses 1 and 2 have long been suspected, confirmation of the third hypothesis will have particular implications for leisure consumer education programmes.

2.3 Methodology of the Study by Belley et al.

Before going on to examine in detail the way in which we investigated the two broad types of problems, we should briefly examine the basic methodology of the study. This methodology was based on the respondent as the prime source of information. Professional interviewers asked open and closed questions, as specified in a questionnaire. Various goods and services were

listed on cards in order to aid the respondent in remembering any problems that he may have had. A stratified sampling technique by administrative region was used ($n=1876$). The cases were then weighted, so that the results would be representative of the entire province. The original data was obtained in order to carry out particular analyses that were not available in the report by Belley et al. Although the results that we will present were obtained from secondary analyses, the type of analysis itself may have been inspired by a similar one carried out by the authors.

2.3.1 Methodology for the Investigation of Type 1 Leisure Problems

The main approach to the study of the characteristics of Type 1 leisure problems is to compare leisure problems with non-leisure problems. This comparison will be effectuated at a number of levels of analysis; for example, category of problem, the factors that influence the report of a problem, the seriousness of the problem, and final satisfaction. This approach first of all requires an understanding of the way that the original study identified Type 1 problems.

Among the eleven categories of problems investigated by Belley et al., five of them permit us to examine problems related to leisure goods or services. These are: (1) delivery of goods, (2) misleading advertising (goods or services), (3) over-priced products or services, (4) defective products, and, (5) quality of services. The question was worded in the following manner: "During the past year, have you (the respondent or his family) had

any complaints concerning ... ?" The respondent was then asked to read a list of possible goods or services, and to identify the offending items. For each category of problem, it was possible to indicate a maximum of three to ten problems, depending on the category itself. For the detailed questions that followed, (including some concerning the importance of the problem, and final satisfaction), the respondent was asked to select the two most outstanding problems. Thus the analyses that concern satisfaction and importance are in relation to problems that were considered relatively important.

The authors were concerned with consumption problems in general, giving us the methodological advantage that there is little chance that leisure consumption problems were over reported. This is important in establishing the relative frequency of leisure consumption problems. Also, the wide scope of the research allows us to compare leisure and non-leisure problems, as we have previously indicated.

For their own analyses, Belley et al. did not differentiate between leisure and non-leisure problems. Since this distinction is necessary for our own study, a problem in each of the above five categories was classified into either a leisure or non-leisure problem, according to common sense. Thus the possible objects of discontent were classified according to the following table (the general classification into goods or services follows that of Belley et al.):

Leisure Goods

tape recorders

radios

stereo-sets

television-sets

record players

camera

sports articles in general

(camping, fishing, hunting, skiing)

bicycles

boats (canoes, rowboats, etc.)

musical instruments

motorcycles

snowmobiles

swimming pool

records or cassettes

books

toys

(16 possibilities in all)

Leisure Servicessubscriptions (newspapers,
books, magazines, records, etc.)

travel agencies

dating agencies

private schools (dance, driving,
personality, language, music
art)

leisure services (theatre, cinema,

Other (major headings)

major household goods

furniture

electrical appliances

clothes, animals, beauty products

(37 possibilities in all)

Other (Services)

Professional Services

(architects, doctors, lawyers,
etc.)Semi-Professional (insurance and
financial services, carpenters,
cleaners, etc.)

(37 possibilities)

outdoor recreation)
hotels, motels, restaurants
(6 possibilities)

Since one of the independent variables in our analysis will be "defence mechanisms," it is necessary to know how Belley et al. defined this term. For the authors, defence mechanisms may be of an institutional nature (government services, consumer organizations, courts) or individual mechanisms, (those acquired through experience, knowledge, or personal contacts). The following table summarizes the operational definition of defence mechanisms:

Index of Defence Mechanisms

(for complete explanation see Belley, et al., 1980, 330-338)

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Description</u>
Care in Buying	prepare a budget, or shopping list, determine maximum amount willing to pay, do comparison shopping, consult product information, keep bills
Informed Consumer	read articles or listen to programmes devoted to consumer information or protection
Member of Consumer Associations	belong to, or have contact with, various consumer associations
Judicial Mechanisms	subjective and objective knowledge

	of consumer laws
Confident or Optimist	a positive attitude towards the possibility that he can win his cause in relation to a merchant or professional
Tendency to go to Court	the possibility of seeking judicial solutions, in relation to the amount of money involved
Potential Help from Social Contacts	belong to various organizations, ability to use one's social or professional contacts as resources

We should quickly point out, as the authors have done, that the above dimensions of defence mechanisms are not the only possible ones, nor do they represent the only possible mechanisms that could be bolstered by educational programmes. On the other hand, educational programmes concerned with Type 1 problems would very likely attempt to increase the efficiency of at least one or more of the above mechanisms. From the point of view of our own conceptual framework, these mechanisms diminish or counteract the effects of mechanisms that operate in conjunction with the Economic, Politico-Institutional, and Psychological forces. For this reason, the effect of these mechanisms, as they have been operationally defined, are of potential importance to leisure consumer education. For the purposes of statistical analysis, an individual is classified as having a low or high level of defence

mechanisms depending on his score in relation to the median of the entire sample.

Also required, is an explanation of the way in which we attempted to answer the questions concerning the factors that affect the reporting of leisure consumption problems, and the effect that possession of defence mechanisms may have on the evolution of a problem. In determining the factors that affect the reporting of leisure consumption problems, we hypothesized that these will be the same as for those that affect the report of a consumption problem in general. For this reason we selected factors that (1) Belley et al. found to be determinant, (2) are most useful in explaining the phenomenon of reported problems, and (3) would be most useful in identifying target clientele. These factors are: level of consumption, age, education, and presence of defence mechanisms (Belley et al., 1980, 189-242). The effect of these factors on leisure and non-leisure problems was compared in order to ascertain whether leisure problems had any specific characteristics.

The second question concerning the effect of defence mechanisms on the evolution of leisure consumption problems was approached by identifying three of the key "stages" among the numerous possible stages in the evolution of a problem (analysed in Belley et al., 1980, 245-300). The three selected stages were: the reporting of a problem, the subjective importance of the problem (to see if leisure problems are more important than non-leisure ones), and the final level of satisfaction concerning

the outcome of the problem.

Problem importance and satisfaction were measured in the following manner. The importance of a problem was measured by the scale: very important, important, or not important. For purposes of analysis and presentation, very important and important were grouped together. Satisfaction was measured as follows: very satisfied, satisfied, not satisfied, or problem not solved. For the same reasons, very satisfied and satisfied were grouped together; the same being done for not satisfied and unsolved.

For each leisure and non-leisure problem, the researchers asked questions concerning the importance and final satisfaction. However, the fact that the individual could report any number of either of the types of problems caused a serious difficulty in relation to the statistical analysis. The Chi squared test is not permitted, since the individual could have one or more of both types of problems. Nor is a t-test or analysis of variance acceptable since neither scale is really continuous, and as well, if an individual reported a leisure problem, but not a non-leisure one, that individual would have been declared missing. For these reasons, our presentation and interpretation of the importance and satisfaction will be based on the relative percentage of the two types of problems.

2.3.2 Methodology for Type 2 Problems: The Disadvantaged Consumer

Belley et al. report that leisure consumption varies according to age, education, and income (p. 25). These variables,

along with occupation, will be used in identifying the low-level leisure consumer.

However, to effectuate this analysis, we will need a working definition of leisure consumption. For Belley et al., leisure consumption is the participation in leisure forms that require expenditures, and in particular, those forms that indicate the "... ability or desire of the consumption units to attain or attempt to attain more discriminating forms of leisure and the cumulation of forms that go beyond the usual nature of generally shared leisure forms." (My translation of a passage in Belley et al., 1980, 22). This definition, then, refers to leisure expenditures that are of an elitist orientation. Although this conception of leisure consumption is more restrictive than our own delimitation of leisure consumption advanced in the introduction, none the less, it would appear to be an acceptable approximation.

The strength and weakness of the authors' working definition of leisure consumption will be more readily understood by examining the indicators used to create their consumption index. The items, as well as the points given to each answer, are as follows:

1. Among the following pastimes, which do you engage in?

regularly(3) occasionally(2) never(0)

a) movies

b) plays, concerts, shows,

c) restaurants and pubs

d) clubs and discotheques

e) professional spectator sports

f) sports involving cost such as alpine skiing, golf, bowling
etc.

2. During the past two years, did you or your spouse take
any pleasure trips, for one week or longer, within or outside
the province of Québec?

a) Each trip (maximum 4)	2 points
b) Expenditures on each trip	
\$100-499	1
500-999	2
<u>1000 and over</u>	<u>3</u>
maximum	38

Although the original Belley et al. leisure consumption index used only the above two questions, we felt that two others asked in the study also referred to pertinent leisure expenditures. Moreover, there was a relatively high correlation between these two questions and the original index ($r=.6$ and $.5$ respectively). The two questions, with the points assigned, were:

3. On the average, how much does your family spend a week
on entertainment?

expenditures	points
less than \$1	0
\$1 - \$2	2
3 - 4	3
5 - 8	4
9 - 12	5

13 -18	6
19 -24	7
25 -34	8
35 and over	9

4. Do you or your spouse own: (yes - 2 points, no - 0)

- a) a colour television set
- b) a tent-trailer or camper
- c) alpine or cross-country skiing equipment

During the past year, did either one of you call

once or more upon the services of ...

- d) a health or physical fitness studio
- e) a travel agency
- f) a private school of any type

These two additional questions, adding another possible 21 points to the original leisure consumption index, were felt to improve the measurement of an individual's or family's leisure consumption by taking into consideration their entertainment expenditures, and their utilization of certain leisure goods or services.

There are two main advantages and disadvantages of the final index. The first advantage is that the index takes into account a variety of leisure expenditures that, taken individually, are quite feasible for the majority of the population. Second, the index gains its discriminatory power (capacity to measure elitist consumption) through the relative frequency that a consumer pays for leisure goods or services (questions 1, 2, 4), the magnitude

of the expenditure (questions 2, 3), and through the cumulative effect itself, gained by summing up the various points.

The main disadvantage, as we have noted, is that the index could have included expenditures on a greater number of leisure goods and services, and particularly public or semi-public services (i.e. registration fees for adult education or recreation courses and workshops). As well, a provision could have been made for specialized consumption: relatively high expenditures on one particular leisure form (the book collector or the amateur photographer, for instance). In spite of this disadvantage, we feel that the final index is still a valuable approximation of leisure expenditures for the population in general.

A second problem with the leisure consumption index in relation to our objective of identifying the disadvantaged leisure consumer, is that the index does not measure the consumer's desire to engage in forms of leisure that require expenditures. In other words, there is a psychological dimension that also determines whether one is disadvantaged or not: the individual has to want to engage in the leisure form that requires expenditures. If the individual has low leisure consumption, but is at ease with this fact, then there is no frustration or disappointment involved.

The study by Belley et al. includes one question concerning the leisure deprivations felt by the individual. Although this question will be used to verify if low leisure consumers also generally feel deprived in relation to leisure, it is not conclusive enough to convert the Leisure Consumption Index into an

Index of Disadvantaged Leisure Consumers. For this reason, during the discussion of the low consumption levels of particular social groups, we will only be able to indicate whether or not subjective feelings of deprivation generally accompany low levels of leisure consumption.

The frequency distribution of the final index was as follows (maximum, 59 points):

Level of Consumption	no. of points	Absolute	Relative
		Frequency	Frequency
Very Low	0- 5	680	23.3
Low	6-12	680	23.3
High	13-20	787	27.0
Very High	21-59	766	26.3

2.4 Findings

2.4.1 Leisure Type 1 Problems

Table 2 presents the relative distribution of leisure and non-leisure problems according to the problem category. As well, we have indicated the percentage of consumers who reports at least one problem for a given category (incidence).

Table 2
Distribution and Incidence of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems
According to Category

	Leisure percent (incidence)		Non-Leisure percent (incidence)	
Delivery	7.4	(1.6)	8.0	(7.2)
Misleading Advertising	9.9	(2.0)	6.7	(6.2)
High Prices	18.3	(3.0)	37.7	(22.7)
Defective Products	55.8	(10.8)	33.9	(22.5)
Quality of Services	8.6	(1.7)	13.7	(12.4)
For all categories	100.0	(16.8)*	100.0	(47.4)*

Chi squared $p < .01$

* The percentage of all respondents who report at least one leisure consumption problem (incidence) is 16.8. The sum of the percentages for each category is greater than 16.8 since a consumer may report a leisure problem for more than one category. The same comment applies to non-leisure problems.

Two important remarks can be made with respect to Table 2. First, 16.8 percent of the population report at least one leisure problem, whereas for problems other than leisure (for the five categories under consideration), 47.4 percent of the population report at least one problem. Additionally, only 51.1 percent of the population report at least one or more problems of either form. Thus, an important percentage of the population recognizes

that they have a consumption problem (as defined by Belley et al.) which we consider to be in the leisure domain, yet this percentage is far less than for those who report non-leisure problems.

Second, the distribution of leisure and non-leisure problems among the five categories is significantly different. Respondents reported a large number of defective leisure goods, 55.8 percent of all leisure problems, whereas leisure problems related to high prices or poor quality of services went unnoticed in comparison with problems classified as non-leisure.

If we adopt the hypothesis suggested by Belley et al. (1980, 241) to the effect that the reporting of a problem depends to a large extent on the consumer's awareness and sensitization to problems that he may be having, then this could help explain the observed differences in the distribution of leisure and non-leisure problems. However, in regards to the fact that more non-leisure problems were reported, it could be argued that there were fewer leisure items (22) than non-leisure (74) from which the respondent could choose, therefore making it difficult to draw any conclusions from the fact that more non-leisure problems were reported. Nevertheless, the observation that leisure problems related to the Quality of Services or High Prices were particularly underrepresented, in relation to non-leisure services, could be explained by the hypothesis of Belley et al. According to this line of reasoning, relatively fewer numbers of problems were reported for these categories since leisure consumers are relatively unaware that these types of problems also

exist in the field of leisure.

If the quality of leisure services appears to receive relatively little critical attention, the same can be said for problems with leisure services in general. If the relative number of problems with leisure services (versus leisure goods) are compared with non-leisure, then we obtain the following results.

Table 3

Relative Number (Percentage) of Problems with Leisure Services
and Goods Compared with Non-Leisure

	Leisure	Non-Leisure
Goods	75.5	57.6
Services	24.5	42.4
Total (Percent)	100.0	100.0

In the field of leisure, problems with services account for only 25 percent of all problems, whereas for non-leisure, services account for 42 percent of all problems. Since for both leisure and non-leisure, only private or semi-private (doctors, optometrists) services were being considered, there is little likelihood that these results are due to questionnaire bias. Rather, we could hypothesize that leisure services, in comparison with non-leisure services, are something of a sacred cow. Perhaps leisure services are already all that the consumer hoped for, or perhaps the lack of reported problems more accurately reflects an

attitude that "if I do not see it, perhaps it does not exist."

This hypothesis finds support when one considers the effect of defence mechanisms. According to Belley et al., the individual with a high level of defence mechanisms tends to perceive more problems. This is exactly what happens in the case of leisure problems in the services sector.

Table 4

Percentage of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems in the Services and Goods Sectors According to the Level of Defence Mechanisms of the Individual Reporting

	Services		Goods	
	Leisure	Non-Leisure	Leisure	Non-Leisure
Low Defence Mechanisms	22.9	29.6	31.1	33.3
High Defence Mechanisms	77.1	70.4	68.9	66.9
Total Percentage	100	100	100	100

The preceding table indicates that the presence of defence mechanisms has a more pronounced effect in stimulating the reporting of a leisure service problem, than it has for non-leisure services. The same general tendency is also found in the goods sector, though the effect is much less marked than for the services sector. Since the presence of defence mechanisms (which represent a cautious, critical attitude) have such a notable effect in relation to leisure service problems, this lends support to our hypothesis that a mechanism of non-perception inhibits the report of problems related to leisure services.

If we turn to the sector of leisure goods, one specific reason for the relatively high level of problems reported with leisure goods is the high number of problems concerning television malfunction. This single item contributed to 40 percent of all leisure problems. The second single most important item was a service: problems related to motels and restaurants, which in turn represented 12 percent of all problems. We could point out that of all the items shown to the respondent, these two items are probably the ones with the highest usage. They would also appear to be the items that most irk the individual when some aspect does not live up to his expectations.

A Comparison of the Evolution of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems

As we pointed out earlier, a greater number of individuals report one or more non-leisure problems than they do for leisure problems. The recognition that a problem exists, be it leisure or non-leisure, is, however, only the first step in a problem-solving process. We could push our questioning further by asking whether leisure problems have other specific characteristics in relation to this process. These characteristics, in turn, may help to explain why they are less frequently reported.

One of the first questions that come to mind is the relative seriousness of a leisure problem. In Chapter 1 we indicated that leisure consumption is a valued sector of consumption. If this is the case, it would seem that a problem here should be relatively important. The following table indicates just the opposite.

Table 5

Comparison of the Percentage of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems
Considered Serious

Overall		Controlling for Level of Leisure Consumption		Controlling for Level of Leisure Consumption and Level of Defence Mechanisms				
		Leisure	Other	Defence Mechanisms	Leisure	Other		
Leisure	Other	Low	70.3	84.2	Low	69.7	79.1	
		High	71.4	82.7	High	70.7	89.2	
					Low	76.7	81.1	
						High	70.2	83.3

The preceding table indicates that in general, fewer leisure consumption problems are considered serious than for non-leisure problems. This remains true independent of the level of leisure consumption or defence mechanisms (we will discuss the effect of defence mechanisms later). The fact that relatively fewer leisure problems are considered serious could also partly explain why fewer individuals report a leisure problem to begin with. If problems in the leisure sector are less important, then it would be natural that they go relatively unnoticed.

The consumer who does report a problem may try a number of

things to solve that problem before finally giving up, or before a solution is found. The question that interests us here is whether leisure problems generally have greater chances than non-leisure problems of being solved satisfactorily.

Table 6

Comparison of the Percentage of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems
That Are Solved to the Satisfaction of the Consumer

Overall	Controlling for Level of Leisure Consumption	Controlling for Leisure Consumption and Complaint	Controlling for Leisure Consump- tion, Complaint and
			Defence Mechanisms
		Complained	
			Leisure Other
		No	Low 38.1 26.4
			High 31.6* 19.4
		Yes	Low 41.2 35.8
			High 73.9 37.2
		No	Low 27.8* 26.3
			High 29.2 20.9
		Yes	Low 39.4 47.4
			High 61.7 36.1
	Low	Leisure 50.6 Other 31.0	
	High	Leisure 46.7 Other 31.9	
Leisure 47.7 Other 31.6			

* less than 20 leisure problems

The preceding table indicates that relatively more leisure problems are solved satisfactorily than non-leisure problems. This also remains true in spite of one's level of leisure consumption. However, this difference also depends on whether a complaint was formulated regarding the problem. When there was a complaint, almost twice the number of leisure problems, in comparison with the others, were satisfactorily solved. Or perhaps more accurately, when a leisure problem provokes a complaint, the criteria concerning a satisfactory resolution are less severe... For reasons that must be related to the very nature of leisure problems, the individual finds it easier to negotiate a satisfactory solution for a leisure problem.

The Relative Effects of Defence Mechanisms on the Reporting of Leisure and Non-Leisure Problems

A number of factors have been identified by Belley et al. as affecting the reporting of a consumption problem in general. Our interest here is to identify these factors in order to control for them while analyzing the effect of the defence mechanisms.

Consumption level is a prime factor, since those individuals who have greater contact with goods or services naturally are more likely to meet with a problem. As well, younger consumers appear to have greater expectations in regards to consumption, since they generally report more problems, independent of consumption level. Consumers with a higher level of education also report more problems. Additionally, one might suspect that the presence of defence mechanisms would aid the consumer in avoiding problems.

Since we are especially interested in the potential effect of defence mechanisms on the reporting of leisure consumption problems, an attempt was made to control for the effects of the previously mentioned socio-demographic variables. This was done by breaking the population down into groups that were relatively homogeneous in terms of leisure consumption, age, and education. Then each group was examined to see whether individuals with a high level of defence mechanisms had an increased likelihood of reporting leisure consumption problems. The results of this analysis follow:

Table 7

Percentage of Population Segment Reporting One or More Leisure Consumption Problems According to Level of Defence Mechanisms

Characteristics of Population Segment			Percentage Reporting 1 or More Leisure Problems for Those with	
Leisure Consumption	Age	Education (years)	Low Level Def Mech	High Level Def Mech
low	18-34	0-9	12.4	24.1 N.S.
"	"	10 & over	22.6	19.4 N.S.
"	35-54	0-9	16.2	11.6 N.S.
"	"	10 & over	5.3	22.9 * = .02
"	55 & over	0-9	6.6	11.6 N.S.
"	"	10 & over	6.4	11.2 N.S.
High	18-34	0-9	12.1	31.9 * = .03
"	"	10 & over	8.7	36.3 * = .01
"	35-54	0-9	13.9	25.4 * = .02
"	"	10 & over	24.4	18.6 N.S.
"	55 & over	0-9	14.8	0.0 N.S.
"	"	10 & over	7.4	13.1 N.S.

N.S. Not Significant, * probability for Chi squared value

The preceding table indicates that four of the population segments report significant differences in the numbers of consumers reporting one or more leisure problems according to level of defence mechanisms (after controlling for level of leisure consumption, age, and education). For these groups, the trend is towards reporting more leisure problems if defence mechanisms are high. Belley et al. report the same trend for consumption problems in general (1980, 219). We also observed the same trend for our non-leisure problems.

As Belley et al. point out, a hypothesis that defence mechanisms help the consumer to avoid problems is not totally accurate, given these results. Rather, the positive relation between the level of defence mechanisms and reported problems corresponds to a sensitizing effect of the defence mechanisms. With a higher number of defence mechanisms one is more likely to watch for, and be critical of, goods and services that do not meet expectations. These expectations are raised through the nature of the defence mechanisms themselves: an awareness of consumer information describing best buys or consumer problems, effort to make a rational purchase, awareness of consumer problems through being a member of consumer associations, and so on. Continuing this line of reasoning, the index of defence mechanisms, rather than measuring one's ability to avoid problems, measures instead the consumer's intent to avoid being "had" or exploited.

Our results indicate however, that only particular segments of the population seem to be influenced by the relatively high

level of defence mechanisms in relation to the reporting of leisure consumer problems: middle-aged, low level leisure consumers relatively well educated, young high level leisure consumers, or middle-aged high level leisure consumers with relatively little education. These are the groups that would seem to profit the most from a leisure consumer education programme based on the defence mechanisms suggested by Belley et al.

The above findings are extremely limited, however. They suggest only that there are certain groups that appear to be affected by defence mechanisms taken as a whole. This does not mean that there is no one in the other segments that would profit from a greater possession of these mechanisms. Nor does it point out the particular mechanisms that could be most useful for particular segments. As well, we cannot indicate the groups that would be most willing or capable of assimilating these mechanisms. But of most importance, it must be recognized that the data or methodological approach of the study by Belley et al. is not appropriate in finding answers to these questions. In order to do this, it would be necessary to turn to methodologies developed by educational programme evaluation.

With regards to the seriousness of leisure problems (Table 5), defence mechanisms do not appear to have the same effect as they do for the reporting of a leisure problem. It should be noted that individuals with a high level of defence mechanisms find fewer leisure problems serious, in relation to non-leisure, than those with low defence mechanisms. Perhaps someone who has

these defence mechanisms is more sensitive to the importance of non-leisure problems than he is to leisure problems.

Concerning final satisfaction (Table 6), we observe that there is a greater difference between the percentage of leisure and non-leisure problems satisfactorily solved for those reported by individuals with a high level of defence mechanisms, than those reported by individuals with a low level of defence mechanisms. In addition to the fact that more leisure problems result in a satisfactory solution than do non-leisure ones, it is all the easier to solve leisure problems when one has a high level of defence mechanisms. Since the effect of defence mechanisms on satisfaction is mainly leisure specific, we would hypothesize that it is not the defence mechanisms as such that have a "miraculous" effect, but rather the nature of the leisure problem itself that makes it easier for these mechanisms to have an effect.

The overall evaluation that we would make of the defence mechanisms defined by Belley et al. is that they do appear to be useful in the field of leisure consumption, though their contribution is limited. The mechanisms are limited both in terms of the groups that are responsive to their critical nature, and in terms of encouraging leisure consumers to consider their problems as serious. On the other hand, leisure problems reported by an individual with a high level of defence mechanisms do have greater chances of a satisfactory outcome.

2.4.2 Type 2 Problems: The Low Level Leisure Consumer

A number of socio-demographic variables influence one's level of leisure consumption. With the aid of these variables we can identify various social groups that have a low level of leisure consumption.

Table 8

Average Leisure Consumption of Various Social Groups

1. According to Family Income

Very Low	Low	High	Very High
0 - 6,520	6,650-12,000	12,126-19,300	19,500 and over
7.1	11.7	16.3	21.1

(Oneway $p < .01$)

2. According to Occupation

Prof Managers Admin	Semi-Prof	Office	Skilled Workers	Semi-Non Skilled	Farmers	Retired
22.0	20.0	17.3	15.1	12.9	7.7	8.4

(Oneway $p < .01$)

3. According to Education

Primary	Secondary	College	University
8.7	15.4	20.4	22.0

(Oneway $p < .01$)

4. According to Age

18-34	35-54	55 and over
18.2	15.2	8.9

(Oneway $p < .01$)

Specifically, there are certain social groups that have particularly low levels of leisure consumption.

Particular Groups with Low Level Leisure Consumption

Group	percentage of population	mean score
1. individuals 55 and over with primary school education	15	7.0
2. individuals 55 and over with family revenue under \$12,000	19	7.6
3. farmers	3.3	7.7
Comparison Group individuals 35-54 with college education or better	6.7	23.7

The above results confirm what we stated in Chapter 1: leisure consumption is not at all egalitarian in nature, but, rather, highly elitist. With this in mind, it could be expected that a greater number of individuals who cannot procure leisure goods or services that are culturally defined as desirable, would experience frustration or deprivation with regards to

opportunities for leisure consumption. This hypothesis proves to be somewhat inexact.

Table 9

Percentage of Consumers Worried About Lack of Leisure
According to Level of Leisure Consumption

	Level of Leisure Consumption			
	Very Low	Low	High	Very High
percent worried	36.6	33.8	34.4	21.7
percent not worried	63.4	66.2	65.6	78.3
total percent	100	100	100	100

probability for Chi squared value $<.01$

The preceding table indicates that roughly one-third of the individuals who belong to the lower three quartiles of leisure consumption are concerned about a lack of leisure. In contrast, only 22 percent of the individuals who have very high leisure consumption are worried about their leisure. It is as though most individuals need to attain a very high level of leisure consumption before their leisure needs are finally met. Since almost as many individuals with high leisure consumption complain of lack of leisure as for those with very low leisure consumption, the need is perhaps relative to one's situation. This need would expand constantly with an increase in one's level of leisure consumption, up until one attains quite a high level.

Since Belley et al. included only one question that touched on

the felt deprivations of low leisure consumers, some caution should be taken when interpreting these results. In fact, much more research is required in order to explore those deprivations felt by leisure consumers. Research techniques borrowed from psychology would also be quite useful in permitting finer analyses. In our opinion, then, the question concerning the relationship of the level of leisure consumption and the felt deprivations of the leisure consumer, remains open.

2.5 Conclusion: Leisure Problems Reported by the Consumer Himself

A secondary analysis of a study carried out in Québec by Jean-Guy Belley, Jacques Hamel, and Claude Masse has allowed us to further explore the nature of leisure consumption problems, from the viewpoint of problems reported by the consumer himself. In spite of the fact that the authors mainly investigated a particular type of problem--problems due to tension in the relationship between consumer and merchant or manufacturer--we were able to make a number of important observations. These were:

1. Leisure consumption problems (as we were able to define them in relation to the study by Belley et al.) exist in two forms. Each form (Type 1, Type 2) is significantly present in the field of leisure consumption.

2. Type 1 leisure problems (problems with delivery, quality of services, equipment breakdown, etc.), display a number of specific characteristics in relation to non-leisure problems.

2a. Most leisure problems concern defective goods. On the other hand, problems with leisure services were relatively under-reported. This would indicate that consumers are even less critical of leisure services than they are for non-leisure services.

2b. Fewer leisure problems are considered serious than non-leisure problems. Since a reported leisure problem has less chance of being considered important, this attitude may contribute to restraining the report of a leisure problem itself. The observation that relatively few leisure problems are considered serious, raises the question of why. Further research should consider this important question. Thus one of the basic "problems" of the leisure consumer is his ignorance of the existence of leisure consumption problems, perhaps because he refuses to consider a problem in this sector as serious.

2c. Relatively more leisure problems finally result in satisfaction than non-leisure problems. This could be due to the fact that relatively more leisure problems are goods problems, and goods problems are more easily solved than services problems. On the other hand, it is also possible that the leisure consumer "relaxes" the criteria in relation to which he judges a successful solution.

2d. Defence mechanisms, as Belley et al. defined them, have the effect of increasing the likelihood that a consumer will report a leisure problem, though this is true only for well defined segments of the population. In light of the increase in reported

leisure problems, the defence mechanisms would appear to play the role of sensitizing the individual to the existence of consumption problems. It would seem that the population groups sensitive to the effect of these mechanisms would be the ones to be most affected by education of this particular nature. However, methodologies from educational evaluation would be much more appropriate in determining the real effect of these mechanisms, as well as the characteristics of individuals who are most sensitive to them. In addition, the defence mechanisms appear to have little effect with regards to increasing the probability that leisure problems be considered serious. In relation to final satisfaction, they appear to increase the chances of satisfaction only for those who complain. The fact that this occurs uniquely in relation to leisure problems further strengthens our conclusion that leisure problems have their own particular characteristics.

3. In relation to Type 2 problems, our secondary analyses corroborate the findings of authors cited in Chapter 1. Leisure consumption is influenced by age, education, income, and occupation. Concretely, this means that various social groups are unable to enjoy the pleasures and benefits that leisure consumption is supposed to bring.

Our hypothesis that low level leisure consumers would consider a Type 1 leisure problem to be more serious than high level leisure consumers was not confirmed. Perhaps because leisure goods or services are generally considered to be luxuries, low level leisure consumers are not relatively more bothered than

high level leisure consumers.

Our secondary analysis of the study by Belley et al. has allowed us to further explore the tensions of the leisure consumer concerning unfulfilled leisure consumption expectations. Of particular importance is the fact that problems related to the interaction between the consumer and the merchant or producer showed specific characteristics in the field of leisure consumption. If objectives for leisure consumer education are to be appropriate for this field of consumption, they will need to take this reality into consideration. The final chapter will attempt to deal with this reality while suggesting means of overcoming the leisure consumer's problems discussed in Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 3

Objectives for Leisure Consumer Education

The present study has explored a number of problems present in the field of leisure consumption. These include the exploitation of the leisure instinct by individuals and companies with a profit motive, the search for prestige or group membership through conspicuous consumption of leisure goods or services, vicious circles of wants and needs that result in unexpected costs, the breakdown, high cost, or low quality of goods and services, the complacent attitude of the leisure consumer towards these functional problems, and frustration due to the inaccessibility of leisure consumption. The origin of these problems was located both in the social and economic environment, and in the individual's attitudes towards his own behavior and that of others.

The thesis underlying our analysis is that education is needed to aid the leisure consumer in overcoming these problems. Without this education, it is reasonable to assume that an

important number of individuals will continue to experience tensions related to the inability of leisure consumption to live up to their expectations.

Educational programmes can attempt to reduce and prevent these tensions by changing the individual's attitudes and behavior in relation to his leisure consumption. Moreover, in the long run, it could reduce the social and economic source of leisure consumption problems, though this result may be achieved only indirectly through the individual. As the individuals that compose the social and economic environment change, or as they act on its principal institutions, the external sources of leisure problems would also diminish. Thus, educational programmes must focus on the individual both as a source of these problems, and as a means of improving the social and economic environment. This principle will become clearer as we discuss the concrete form that educational programmes should take in relation to the various leisure consumption problems.

3.1 A Common Approach to Leisure Consumption Problems?

In retrospect, it would appear that three general types of problems were discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. The first type of problem noted, was the disparity among various social groups in terms of their ability to gain access to leisure consumption. The second type concerned the forces or influences that channel the leisure instinct into consumption forms that do not correspond to the expectations of the individual. The third type was the

relative passivity of the leisure consumer when confronted by the "micro problems" due to the interaction between the consumer and the merchant or producer. Though these three types of problems result in frustration on the part of the consumer, neither the form of the frustration, nor the nature of the problem is identical for all three.

In view of these different types of problems, two questions emerge. First, should leisure consumer education concentrate on any one type, and second, is there a general approach that could be taken for all three?

Our response to the question concerning the desirability of the field of leisure consumer education concentrating on any one problem is that such action would ignore the existence of problems that we have discussed in this paper. The defender of this approach would need to demonstrate that a given type of problem was of no consequence, or would be adequately covered by means of one of the other types of problems. This latter argument presupposes the reduction of two or more problems to a simpler form, with a single treatment that would be equally effective for problems considered in their original terms. Although such a development could be valuable to the new field that is leisure consumer education, this synthesis would be beyond the scope of the present exploratory study. Thus we feel that the best conceptualization for the moment, for the field of leisure consumer education, is to treat leisure consumption problems as three distinct types.

This does not mean that there cannot be a basic course of action common to all three types of problems. Our answer to the question of the possibility of a general approach to leisure consumption problems is affirmative. It would appear possible that one approach can take into consideration a characteristic common to these problems, and yet be, at the same time, flexible enough to be expanded upon in relation to the particularities of each type.

3.2 The Need for a Critical Attitude

It would seem to us that the major characteristic common to all three types of leisure problems is the individual's lack of a critical attitude towards his own actions as well as those of others in the field of leisure consumption. This observation is substantiated both by the remarks of authors that we have studied, and by our own comments. The recurrence of the theme of a lack of a critical attitude will be recognized as we take a closer look at each type of problem. In relation to the first type, the disparity among leisure consumers, we found that although an individual's leisure consumption is highly variable, there appears to be little change in the number of individuals experiencing frustration, for the lower three-fourths of the population. In fact, even for those having very little leisure consumption, only about one-third are concerned. It would appear that lack of leisure consumption does not appear to be a burning issue for the have-nots. However, one should remember that this conclusion is suggested by extremely limited data (see Chapter 2, the

disadvantaged leisure consumer). Partial confirmation is found, though, in the absence of political discussion, or attempts by these groups to have access to leisure consumption. Our hypothesis is that low level leisure consumers are not particularly critical of their situation, although this question remains to be fully researched.

The second type of problem, the channelling of the leisure instinct by the four forces discussed in Chapter 1 into consumption forms that disadvantage the individual, takes place with the individual more or less conscious of the action of these forces. The individual may be vaguely aware of tensions (due to these forces), yet he does not, or cannot, identify their origin. It would seem that the best means to neutralizing the pressures that these forces exert on the individual is by criticizing their action and effects. This is the approach taken by André Thibault, who proposes that the main objective of a socio-psychological approach to leisure education is to have the individual become conscious of the forces that control leisure behavior, and to demystify their nature and action (Thibault, 80, 41). A critical attitude towards the forces shaping leisure consumption would thus be in harmony with a socio-psychological approach to leisure education.

We also pointed out in Chapter 1 that many of the authors we reviewed, in addition to providing a scientific analysis of the forces and mechanisms that attempt to control leisure consumption, implicitly or explicitly condemn the individual's ignorance of

these forces. Veblen notes the waste of time and energy brought about by conspicuous consumption, Baudrillard claims that the purchase of group symbols is merely an illusion of happiness, and Linder would have leisure consumers recognize that increasing one's leisure consumption often reduces "leisurely" time. In relation to a different point of view, Hawes and other psychologists note that individuals have leisure motives that could be exploited by marketing programmes. We ourselves noted that one way of decreasing the individual's vulnerability to these programmes would be to have the individual become conscious of his leisure motives, and the mechanisms by which marketing programmes attempt to turn these motives to their advantage. In short, these authors support the need for individuals to critically reconsider their own actions and those of others in relation to leisure consumption.

Our analysis of the third type of problem, tensions in relation to the interaction between the consumer and the merchant or producer, indicated that the difficulty facing leisure consumer education was the relative passivity of the leisure consumer in relation to these tensions. The comparative vulnerability of the leisure consumer was expressed through the relatively low number of leisure problems considered serious, and the higher percentage of problems solved satisfactorily. In concrete terms, this means that the leisure consumer rarely perceives (or lets himself perceive), a problem when he ends up with mediocre or high cost goods and services, and when he does perceive it, it is easily, perhaps too easily, "solved." It would seem to us that the

individual is unreasonably accomodating in regards to this type of problem.

This situation generally improved, however, when the individual possessed a high level of defence mechanisms. That is, if the individual was careful about his shopping, took the time to find out about the products available--a critical attitude towards his consumer behavior--he would also be more likely to perceive his leisure consumption problems. Thus a critical attitude would also likely lead the leisure consumer to the realization that these problems exist in the field of leisure consumption.

This brief review of the principal results of Chapters 1 and 2 substantiates our position that a critical attitude--a disposition towards searching for, and understanding the negative effects of one's own actions as well as those of others--should be the general approach to leisure consumer education. The primary result of this attitude would be to sensitize individuals to the existence of the leisure consumption problems that we have studied. Knowing that these problems exist would provide a stimulus towards an examination of the suitability of one's own behavior, as well as that of others. In turn, this questioning would facilitate a secondary result, the search for and invention of alternate action or behavior. The basic goal of a critical attitude then, is to encourage the search for and adoption of alternate behavior that would eliminate or reduce leisure consumption problems.

3.2.1 The Critical Attitude and the Disadvantaged Leisure Consumer

In Chapters 1 and 2 we noted that a number of social groups have a relatively low level of leisure consumption. In Chapter 2 we also pointed out that about one-third of the population actually experiences frustration in relation to their level of leisure consumption, although this percentage did drop for those with a very high level of leisure consumption. For a highly pertinent study that partially confirms this observation, we would refer the reader to Francken and Raaij (1981). These individuals, those with a low level of leisure consumption or those concerned about their level of leisure consumption, could pursue two possible courses of action. On the one hand, they could refute the legitimacy of discriminatory commercial and government practices that use economic means as the criteria for participation in leisure consumption. This social and political militancy would encourage the disadvantaged leisure consumer to question the validity of his present exclusion from many forms of leisure consumption.

The other line of attack would be to question the very desirability of leisure consumption. Instead of accepting the socio-cultural model of the apparent benefits of leisure consumption, one could explore other leisure forms that require little, or no expenditures. This approach, however, would not be limited solely to disadvantaged leisure consumers, since we consider it to be valid for all population groups. For this reason, we will discuss it in further detail in the next section.

Our own response to this choice is to simultaneously pursue the two courses of action. On the one hand, we believe that a number of barriers, particularly economic and political, deprive various social groups from the benefits associated with elitist forms of leisure consumption. These groups need to be sensitized to their right to access to leisure consumption, and to the political and economic means that could facilitate this access.

However, as a number of authors cited in Chapter 1 suggest, leisure consumption is itself no guarantee of happiness. Even if people did fulfill their leisure consumption aspirations, they would not avoid the various problems studied in Chapters 1 and 2. A viable alternative would be to question the very desirability of leisure consumption, and the forces and mechanisms that promote it. This approach would use criticism of present leisure consumption myths as a stimulus to the exploration or invention of alternate, low or no cost forms of leisure. The individual who finds personal satisfaction or meaning through these alternate leisure forms would no longer have reason to be concerned with the accessibility of leisure consumption.

To our knowledge, although a number of authors have pointed out that various social groups has a low level of leisure consumption, none has suggested concrete solutions to this problem, or any means of aiding consumers concerned about their access to leisure consumption. Nonetheless, the preceding discussion has indicated the general form that educational objectives should take in overcoming this problem. In addition to

the general objectives, we shall suggest a number of concrete means of realizing the objectives.

Objectives for Leisure Consumer Education in Relation to Disadvantaged Leisure Consumers

A) Low-level leisure consumers should be aware of the discriminatory nature of leisure consumption, and have knowledge of social and political means that could increase access to leisure consumption.

The individual should be able to:

- a) identify commercial practices that inhibit leisure consumption by individuals with little economic means (e.g. prices, equipment needed, accessibility),
- b) identify government practices that discriminate against individuals with little economic means (e.g. prices, location, activities offered),
- c) provide justification both for and against commercial and government practices,
- d) identify action that can sensitize others to this problem (e.g. newspaper articles, formation of local action groups, presentations to community and leisure organizations),
- e) identify institutional and political means of changing the situation (e.g. presentations to town council, or recreation directors; participation in a political party).

B) The individual concerned about his access to leisure consumption should be able to indentify the forces and mechanisms that encourage the myths concerning the desirability of leisure consumption. The individual should be able to identify or invent alternative low or no cost leisure forms, or some organizational framework that would help give access to these forms, that are personally significant.

This objective is elaborated on in the next section.

For individuals who have both a low level of leisure consumption and are concerned about it, the preceding two objectives could appear contradictory. It would seem that he is encouraged to increase his leisure consumption by changing the social, economic, and political reality, yet at the same time he is advised to find alternate leisure forms. There are two possible responses to this dilemma. First, inventing alternative leisure forms could be a short term solution to reducing the acuteness of any frustrations felt. Changing the social and economic reality, a long-term solution, would, however, be necessary for the reduction of any residual frustration. Second, the individual must interpret the apparent contradiction as a choice that only he, and not the educator, can make. This choice would be based on his personal values. For example, the individual could guide his action according to whether or not he accepts common beliefs concerning the desirability of leisure consumption. Leisure consumer education can point out possible courses of action, and indicate certain consequences of that

action, but it cannot make decisions for the individual that are essentially related to conflicting value commitments.

3.2.2 The Critical Attitude in Relation to Leisure Consumption Forces

In Chapter 1 we discussed a number of problems related to the economic, politico-institutional, social, and psychological forces and mechanisms that operate in the field of leisure consumption. In order to refresh the reader's memory, he is advised to refer to the resume of Chapter 1. At this point, we would only note that in the introduction to this chapter, we stated that these problems could be reduced if a) the individual understood how his attitudes and action facilitate the apparition of these problems, and b) he was aware of alternate behavior that could reduce the extent of the problems. With this in mind, the following objectives are based directly on the analysis of the leisure consumer's problems found in Chapter 1.

Objectives for Leisure Consumer Education in Relation to the Forces and Mechanisms that Mould Leisure Consumption

The individual should understand the effects of the economic influences in the leisure consumption field, be able to identify related problems, and propose alternative action.

The individual should be able to:

- a) identify a number of leisure and culture industries,
- b) identify the means by which these industries increase consumption (e.g. publicity, free samples, promotional

- goods, festivals),
- c) determine the extent to which he may be a victim of "forced consumption" (e.g. examine whether the earnings from a spouse or a second job go essentially into leisure consumption, or whether a job promotion is sought essentially to increase leisure consumption, and evaluate the effects of this situation on the individual or family),
 - d) propose meaningful alternative leisure forms (these are left up to the individual),
 - e) propose alternate means of producing leisure forms (e.g. community run programmes, co-operatives).

The individual should understand the action of the Political-Institutional influences, be able to identify related problems, and propose means of influencing government.

The individual should be able to identify:

- a) government regulatory action at all levels (e.g. laws concerning leisure goods such as hockey masks, boating equipment, or services, such as the competencies of instructors),
- b) the principle components of consumer law that are directly related to leisure consumption problems (e.g. contracts with private schools),
- c) areas where legislation is needed (e.g. quality of services),
- d) various goods and services "produced" by government (e.g. parks, elitist sport, arts associations, local recreation activities

- e) problems related to government production of goods and services (e.g. unequal distribution, favouritism of particular leisure forms, marketing programmes that mainly benefit vested interests, high costs, lack of citizen input into decision-making, citizen apathy),
- f) means of influencing government (e.g. contact with media, political representatives, political parties, government and recreation department officials, formation or participation in citizen groups, participation in the decision-making processes),
- g) low cost goods or services that one could expect of government.

The individual should understand the effect of the Social influences, and be able to identify related problems and propose alternative forms of behaviour.

The individual should be able to identify:

- a) conspicuous leisure consumption (e.g. expensive vacations, swimming pools, and so on),
- b) the use of leisure goods or services as signs of group membership (e.g. the canoe as sign of the active outdoorsman, the classical concert as sign of the middle or upper classes),
- c) the symbolic nature of his own leisure consumption,
- d) examples of advertisements that incorporate these symbols,
- e) the sources of social pressures in relation to leisure consumption (e.g. colleagues, social clubs, family, friends),
- f) leisure organizations that leave little freedom, and those

with greater flexibility regarding variation or spontaneity in the leisure experience),

- g) alternative social group symbols that are less expensive or more personally significant,
- h) means of increasing the symbolic value of low/no cost services or goods (e.g. city officials playing pick-up hockey on open-air rinks, the recreation department offering rooms for family reunions),
- i) means of procuring "leisurely time" (e.g. change in activities, revised scheduling of time).

The individual should be aware of the psychological influences in the field of leisure consumption, and be able to identify related problems.

The individual should be able to:

- a) identify cases where "too much of a good thing" can spoil the leisure consumer: situations that demand increasing investments for steady, or falling level of satisfaction (e.g. increasingly expensive vacations to exotic places, the record collector's need to expand his collection),
- b) identify his own forms of leisure consumption, and his leisure interests,
- c) identify the "hidden costs" (money, time, discontent, social effects) of his leisure consumption desires,
- d) identify advertising that attempts to sell a product by means of his individual leisure interests,
- e) identify advertising that integrates goods or services

into a leisure form (e.g. beer associated with family reunions, listening to music while jogging or skiing).

The above educational objectives attempt to aid the individual in reducing the impact of the various leisure consumption problems that we have discussed in relation to the influences that mould leisure consumption. These objectives may appear to be too extensive. To this objection we would respond that in our analysis of leisure consumption problems, we elected to explore a number of facets and explanations of tensions experienced by the consumer. Although it was felt that this analysis might perhaps lose a certain degree of precision, it was hoped that it would regain value by, a) reflecting the complexity of the tensions experienced by the leisure consumer, b) staking out a new field of study, and c) indicating a number of possible paths for further study. The objectives themselves, based on this analysis, could not help but inherit the same strengths and weaknesses.

Moreover, we have not yet exhausted the educational repercussions of our analysis. Solutions to problems related to the interaction between consumer and merchant or producer have not yet been translated in terms of educational objectives. The next section will then propose educational objectives in relation to this third area.

3.2.3 The Critical Attitude in Relation to Reported Problems

In Chapter 2, we indicated that the reported leisure problems

actually comprised two basic problems. First, there were the actual complaints themselves, such as high prices, equipment breakdown, poor quality services, and so on. Second, and particularly significant for the present study, our comparison of the evolution of leisure and non-leisure problems suggested that individuals are definitely less aware of the importance and seriousness of the leisure related problems, and less demanding of leisure goods and services.

Our explanation of this second form of leisure problem relies on a mechanism suggested in Chapter 1: the pleasure expected of leisure consumption deters the individual from perceiving the problems associated with it. This explanation finds support from cognitive dissonance theory. In partial terms, this theory proposes that the individual avoids information or behavior that is inconsistent with his attitudes, and seeks information or behaves in such a way that is consistent with them (Shaw and Costanzo, 1970, 207). Thus, if the individual believes that pleasure can be obtained through leisure consumption, he tends to suppress any information or recognition of experiences that are contrary to this belief. Avoiding the recognition of leisure consumption problems, and disavowing their seriousness, would be one form of suppression.

We would argue that this mechanism provides an unwanted invisible veil of protection to the field of leisure consumption. Why should merchants and manufacturers be able to engage in practices in the field of leisure consumption that would be

unacceptable in other fields of consumption? Or why should leisure consumers find relatively few problems related to high prices or the low quality of services? The uncritical consumer becomes a tacit accomplice to the "dumping" of high cost or low quality leisure goods or services.

The need to diminish the exploitation of the leisure consumer is more important than a number of possible "negative effects" that could result from educational programmes which seek to have the individual become aware of these problems. For example, the effort required to become more critical and demanding of leisure consumption could reduce the pleasure associated with it. However, even if the adoption of a critical attitude did reduce the pleasure associated with leisure consumption (this remains to be verified), it would seem to us to be an acceptable tradeoff.

Undoubtedly, a critical attitude and awareness of the existence of leisure consumption problems is needed by the leisure consumer, but this is not entirely sufficient. An individual may be quite critical of his leisure consumption behavior but still be subject to any of the five types of problems inventoried by Belley et al. Leisure consumer education should still be of assistance here, though it is at this point that it could draw most heavily upon traditional consumer education approaches, the defence mechanisms described by Belley et al., and common sense. In particular, the defence mechanisms of Belley et al. are an important component of consumer education, as this field has been described by Uhl (1970), and Herrmann (1979). Additionally, as

our analysis indicated, these defence mechanisms would appear to be useful in stimulating the critical attitude and awareness of consumption problems in the field of leisure. For these reasons, the following objectives will also attempt to strengthen those mechanisms identified by Belley et al.

Educational Objectives in Relation to "Micro" Leisure Consumption Problems

The individual should be able to identify leisure problems related to the interaction between consumer and merchant or producer, and recognize their importance. He should also be able to identify various means and techniques that assure the purchase of leisure goods or services that correspond more closely to his stated desires, as well as means and techniques that could overcome eventual problems.

The individual should be able to:

- a) illustrate, from his own or others' experiences, this type of problem (particularly leisure services),
- b) recognize the seriousness of these problems (e.g. number of problems, tensions and frustrations that result),
- c) recognize that the pleasure he anticipates obtaining from leisure consumption may reduce his awareness of these problems,
- d) identify the advantages, and means of choosing goods or services that correspond to his needs (budgeting, listing desired qualities, etc.),
- e) identify various criteria that could be used in evaluating

the appropriateness of goods or services (e.g. durability, cost, materials, aesthetic appeal, opportunity for self-expression, etc.),

- f) identify sources of information on products and services (Canadian Consumer, Protegez-Vous, specialized reviews, Office de Protection du Consommateur, Better Business Bureau, consumer associations),
- g) identify individual action that could be undertaken in relation to eventual problems (the return of an article, complaint, phone calls, letters),
- h) state the basic content of consumer laws related to the consumption of leisure goods and services
- i) identify professional or institutional sources of possible aid or counselling (professionals, legal aid, O.P.C., small claims court)
- j) identify means of combating high prices or poor quality (alternate leisure forms, goods or services, sources; self-production, formation of co-operatives),
- k) recognize the importance of collective action in relation to producers (e.g. joining consumer's groups, participating in boycotts)

3.3 Final Remarks

The preceding study has attempted to explore the problems experienced by the leisure consumer, and to identify various means by which educational programmes can come to his aid. Our comprehension of the forces and mechanisms that contribute to

these problems, and the educational means that could combat them, have finally been stated in the form of objectives for leisure consumer education.

However, the formulation of these objectives is only the first, necessary step in actually coming to the aid of the leisure consumer. Concrete programmes, offered by educational or private institutions, are needed in order to realize these objectives.

The challenge that faces these programmes is considerable. Without detracting from the seriousness of this challenge, three final remarks would be pertinent. The first concerns the scope of these programmes, the second refers to a particular difficulty that could be encountered, and the third indicates areas in which future research could contribute to these programmes.

First, one should remember that the aim of the present study has been to explore the tensions felt by the leisure consumer, and the educational means available for reducing these problems. It is not realistic to expect that any single programme could cover the entire field, as we have presented it. Consequently, eventual programmes would be encouraged to adapt, select, and specify the objectives in relation to the interests of their clientele, the clientele's experience with leisure consumption problems, their financial and time resources, and knowledge gained through later research.

Second, the would-be educator should be aware that a special difficulty confronts these programmes. It is quite possible that

the very nature of leisure consumption--a search for pleasure and social identity--offers resistance to the adoption of the critical attitude that we have specified in the objectives for leisure consumer education. Cognitive dissonance theory suggests that if leisure consumer education is perceived as running contrary to these beliefs, that either these beliefs will change, or the value of leisure consumer education will be dismissed. Lucy Creighton, in Pretenders to the Throne, while not referring to cognitive dissonance theory, builds a similar argument:

While Americans may not place as high a value on conspicuous consumption as they did when Veblen invented the phrase seventy-five years ago, they still accord high status to those who can buy the higher-priced of two similar goods. At the same time, by stressing the thought and effort needed for wise consumption, the consumer movement has put consumption on a par with toil rather than with production. Working may be tedious and hard, but it brings status and income. But being a "wise" consumer contributes relatively little to income and even less to status. (Creighton, 1976, 85)

Creighton suggests that the consumer movement has had difficulties in encouraging the consumer to reflect on his behavior because of the work-like connotations involved. Such a connotation would be particularly damaging in the leisure domain.

In our opinion, the major difficulty faced by a leisure consumer education programme is that of adapting or inventing

educational techniques that stress the possible benefits of a critical attitude, and minimize the effort required. We also believe that a critical attitude is not necessarily contrary to a search for pleasure and social identity through leisure consumption, though the educator must insure this dissociation. For example, the educator(s) would be well advised to create a game-like, playful atmosphere, where immediate social approbation could reinforce the desired behavior. At this point we cannot offer other suggestions about ways of meeting this problem, since there appears to be very few concrete experiences in leisure consumer education, let alone any literature on the evaluation of leisure consumer education programmes. Nor can we foresee the actual extent of this difficulty. Only after leisure consumer education programmes are attempted, and evaluated, will it be possible to suggest the most effective means and techniques of encouraging the adoption of a critical attitude by the leisure consumer.

Finally, the present study has indicated areas of research that would be directly useful to leisure consumer education programmes. We pointed out that little is known about the kinds of frustration experienced by the disadvantaged leisure consumer, nor the reasons for his apparent docility. Little is known about the exact nature of the vulnerability of the leisure consumer, its magnitude, the most efficient means of reducing it, nor the possible effect on leisure satisfactions in the event that the leisure consumer's vulnerability is reduced. Additionally, evaluation of eventual leisure consumer education programmes

themselves would be needed in order to identify the most efficient educational techniques, and to reorient, if needed, the objectives for leisure consumer education. Research concerning any of the above questions would be highly pertinent to the orientation or operation of leisure consumer education programmes.

The preceding analysis of the problems of the leisure consumer, and the translation of this analysis into objectives for the field of leisure consumer education, will have found their raison d'être if they inspire the formulation of concrete educational programmes. Only through such programmes can the leisure consumer hope to find some relief from the various tensions that he experiences. If tensions are reduced in the field of leisure consumption, would this not be a sure step towards improving the ephemeral "quality of leisure"?

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